

Bir Shrestho Nur Mohammad Monument at last

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, Feb 25: Kashipur is a village far from the madding crowd. This is situated to the northern end of Sharsha thana near the Bangladesh border.

The bravest son of the soil, Bir Shrestho Nur Mohammad and six other valiant freedom fighters who embraced martyrdom during the Liberation War in 1971, were buried here.

Long after 28 years of obscurity and negligence, a monument was built on this graveyard recently in memory of Bir Shrestho Nur Mohammad.

Former chief engineer of Local Government Rural Development (LGRD), Quamrul Islam Siddik took up the project to erect the monument. He got it completed at a cost of Taka Three lakh and 65 thousand.

Except Bir Shrestho Nur Mohammad who are buried here include MCA elect in 1970's election Syed Ator Ali, Subedar Moniruzzaman, Bahadur Gerila, Sepoy Abdus Sattar, Sepoy Enamul Haque, and freedom fighter Abdul Ahad.

Incidentally, Bir Shrestho Nur Mohammad was killed by the Pakistan occupation army in the fight at Gadhali under Gopchandapur union of Jhikmagacha thana on September 5 in 1971.

Syed Ator Ali, MCA-elect was also buried here.

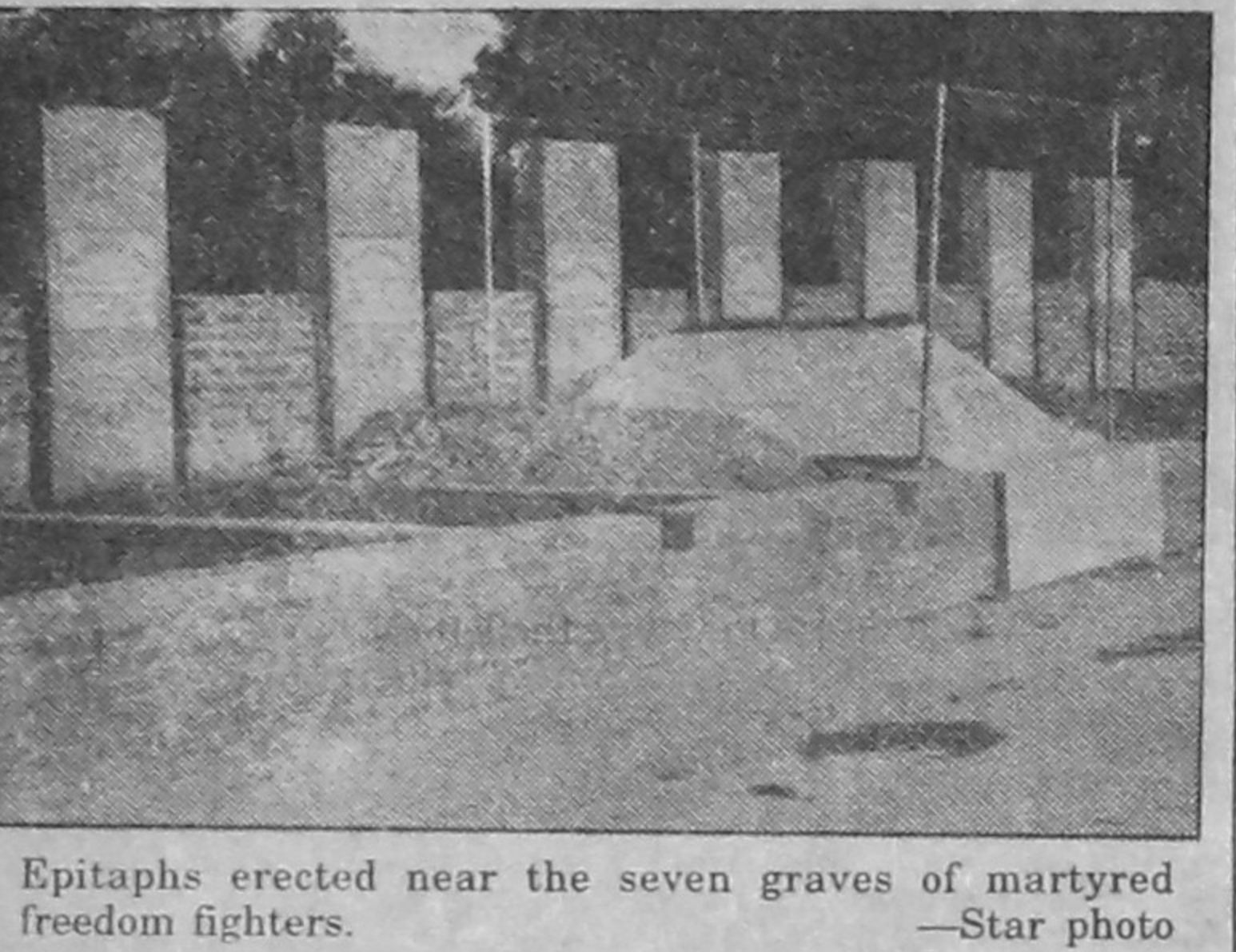
Subedar Moniruzzaman was killed by the enemy in the Liberation War on June 27, 1971.

Bahadur Gerila who was killed at Barabazar after killing 40 enemy soldiers.

Sepoy Abdus Sattar was killed by the enemy in a battle against them at Jadhapur under Jadhapur union of Moheshpur thana in greater Jessore on September 21 in 1971.

Sepoy Enamul Haque was killed in a battle at Makapur under Chowgacha thana on November 17, 1971.

Freedom fighter Abdul Ahad



Epitaphs erected near the seven graves of martyred freedom fighters. —Star photo

Matia says PSA for eradicating terrorism

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Feb 25: Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury has said that the Public Safety Law has been enacted for eradicating terrorism from society, reports BSS.

She said those who are involved in killing, extortion, snatching and terrorism could only opposed the Public Safety Law.

The agriculture minister was speaking as the chief guest at a public meeting organised by district Awami League at Chapainawabganj Municipal Park on Tuesday.

Parliament Member Shaheen Monowara Hoq, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Prof Zinatunessa Talukder and State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Prof. Abdul Quddus spoke on the occasion as special guests.

The agriculture minister said that massive development activities of this government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has brought dynamism in the economy and earned good name and fame at home and abroad.

The opposition, she said, was trying to halt this economic dynamism by their destructive activities. She urged the opposition to stop it for the interest of the people.

Earlier, the agriculture minister visited Dariapur Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Irrigation Project and Gauka Agrani Irrigation Project at Chapainawabganj.

A total of 2,000 acres of land has been brought under irrigation by implementing these two projects. Besides, the agriculture minister visited Chapainawabganj Mango Research Centre and Kallanpur Horticulture Centre.

During the visits, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Prof Zinatunessa Talukder and Shaheen Monowara Hoq MP accompanied the minister.

Punishment to killers of Kushtia trader demanded

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Feb 25: A procession was brought out in Kumarkhali thana headquarters last week, demanding the punishment to the killers of local trader Monwar.

Body of Monwar, 40, was recovered from the river Goral on February 15. He was missing from February 10. Police said Monwar, a trader in local bazaar, was murdered.

Rabi Thakur, business partner of Monwar, was arrested in this connection.

Similar appeal was made by his follower Yunus Ali. Jannatul Ferdous, Lady MP from the district present at the function, was delighted at the arrest of Samad and presented police Super Asaduzzaman Mia a gold replica of boat for the success of his force.

Deputy Commissioner Mahabubur Rahman announced an award of Tk 10 thousand for the policemen who arrested Samad.

ASP Abul Khair and SI Amanullah led the force that succeeded in arresting Samad at about 3:30 pm and a 9 ML pistol with ammunition was recovered from his possession.

A senior police official later told that they would examine track records of those surrendered. If there is no specific case against any one, he will be set free.

69 outlaws surrender in Pabna dist

Move to curb diesel smuggling in frontier areas

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Feb 25: Responding to the increasing tension of farmers over unabated diesel smuggling to a neighbouring country, Agriculture Extension Department here has decided to provide ID cards to the farmers of frontier areas for transshipment of diesel for irrigation, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting on curbing smuggling of diesel at the DC office recently.

Official sources said a good number of diesel-operated pumps have been set up in frontier villages of the district for irrigation to croplands but a section of pump operators are smuggling the fuel to India after collecting it from depots.

They said smuggling of diesel to India has risen due to price hike of fuel in the neighbouring country and frequent devaluation of Taka in Bangladesh.

With the rise of its smuggling, a good number of unauthorised diesel sale centres have sprung up in different parts of the district.

There have been allegations that a group of pump owners are involved in smuggling of fuel as they easily can buy it from the dealers.

On February 10, BDR Javans arrested a pump owner from Shibganj thana along with a truck driver and his helper while realising diesel to a shop in frontier Khaserhat area.

Police said the truck was carrying 9,000 litres of diesel for a pump in Shibganj. Instead of taking the fuel to the pump, they were realising it at the unauthorised shop for smuggling.

Sources at the Agriculture Extension Department said at present there is a demand of 2.40 lakh litres of diesel in the region to operate some 5,000 irrigation pumps, including 3,000 in frontier areas.



Weavers busy working at a factory in Charshoalmari village under Roumari thana in Kurigram district.

Weavers pass hard days

From A Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Feb 25: Weavers in Rowmari and Rajibpur thanas of the district have been facing various problems due to price-hike of yarn and lack of marketing facilities of their products.

About 4,000 weavers in two thanas depend on weaving to earn their living, but they are unable to run their factories mainly because of capital dearth.

The weavers of Char Shoalmari, Kutarchar, Jafarganj, Baghmara, Doikhawa, Ghugumari, Khedaimari, Kazalkata and Gendrarajga of the thanas produce lungi, saree, gamucha and other clothes and sell their products in different bazaars and markets.

Besides, smuggled clothes from neighbouring India have flooded the local markets, taking heavy toll on local weavers.

Weavers said their products could not compete with the smuggled ones in terms of price.

Comparatively cheap smuggled clothes have easy access to buyers, much to sufferings of local weavers.

Many weavers have closed their factories in recent years, giving rise to unemployment.

Moreover, a large number of weavers in the two thanas are contemplating to give up their ancestral profession as they are passing hard days, local people said.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take proper steps to provide assistance to weavers.

Legend of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA)

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Feb 25: The 680th urs of great saint Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) will begin at the shrine in Sylhet town on Saturday (February 26).

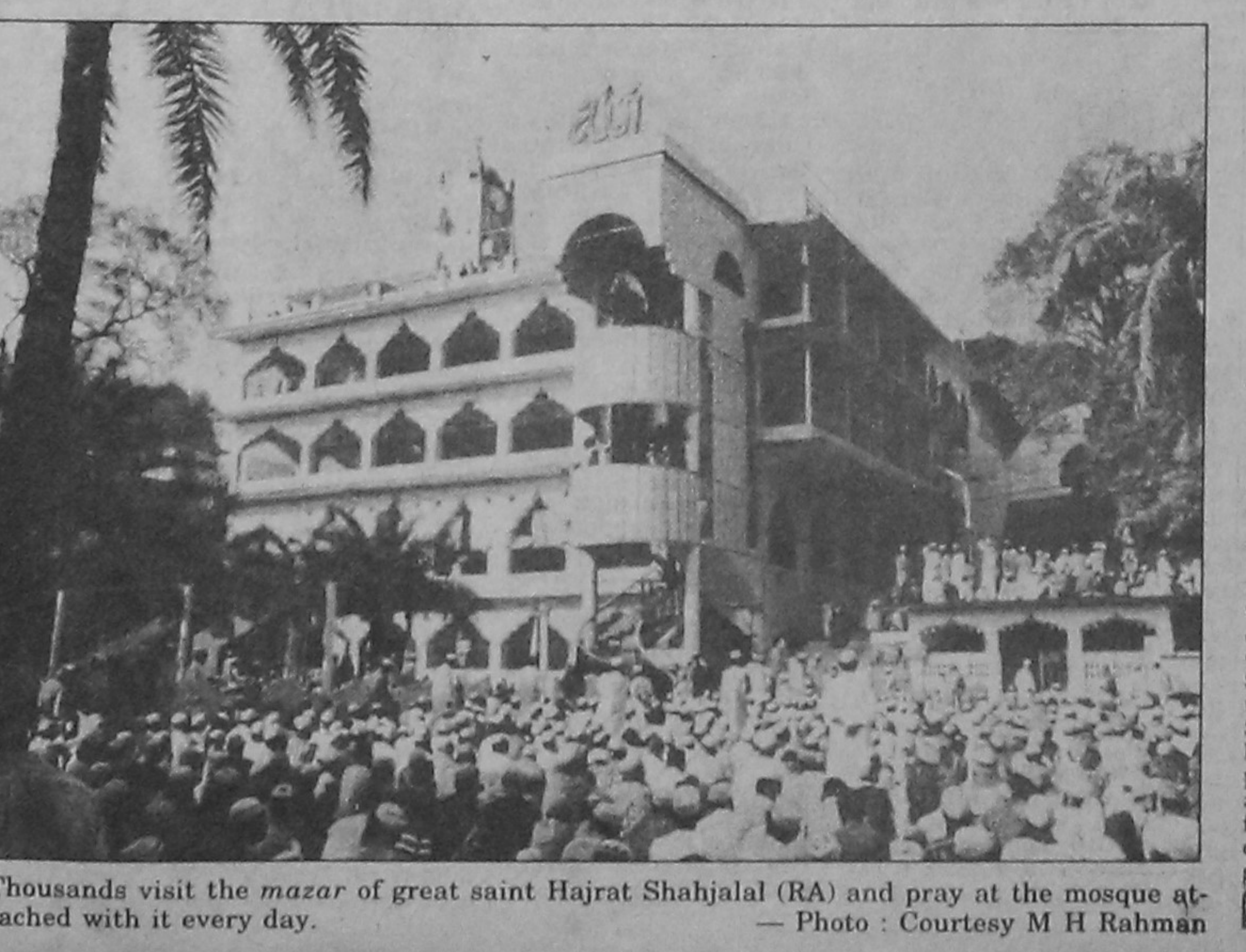
Every year, thousands of devotees from both the Muslim and Hindu communities across the country join the 20-day congregation. The programme includes, placing of *glaf* (Guran Khwari, *mulad*, *mahfil* and *Jikr Akker*). It concludes through the *Akheri Munajat* and distribution of *tobarrak* (sweets) at 3 am on the second day. A country fair is also organised around the shrine area every year. It begins two days ahead of the urs and ends after two days attracting a good number of people from far flung areas.

It was the year of 1303. At that time, Shamsuddin Firoz Shah was the Sultan of Bengal. There were some small states on the foot of Khahia-Jaintia hills ruled by some Hindu kings. Muslim people also used to live in these states under the rule of cruel Hindu kings. Borhanuddin, a Muslim citizen, slaughtered a bullock as a sacrificial animal on the occasion of his son's *Akika*. A kite (bird) picked up a piece of meat from the house which fell inside the temple of King Gourgovinda. The king became angered in it and made a thorough search. His men detected the matter and caught Borhanuddin. They took him to the king. Being ordered by the cruel king, Borhanuddin slaughtered his son. Borhanuddin's right arm was also severed as punishment. Borhan then went to the Sultan and sought justice.

The sultan sent a contingent led by Sikander Gazi to face Gour Govinda. But, he was defeated in a bloody war on the bank of the River Brahmaputra. Sikander had to accept such defeat thrice. The incidents seriously hurt the Sultan of Bengal. Later on, he sent a new warrior leader named Syed Nasiruddin who met Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) on the way. Then Shahjalal was staying at Tribeni of Satgaon on his way from Yemen. Syed Nasiruddin sought help from Hazrat Shahjalal. The Muslim contingent was seriously afraid of danger after repeated defeats. Hazrat Shahjalal agreed with the proposal. He alongwith 360 companions started with Syed Nasiruddin.

Shahjalal alongwith the group reached on the bank of the River Surma. There was no boat to cross the river. He laid the *Jainamati* on the river and crossed it safely. Thus, the great saint made his way to Sylhet region. A coward, Gour Govinda fled away through the back door. Shahjalal and his men won the victory in Sylhet region with a slogan like 'Allahu Akbar' and without any blood shed.

Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) was born in the city of Kurnia of Turkey. His forefathers went to Turkey from Yemen and settled there. His father's name is Makhdam Bin Mohammad. Shahjalal lost his parents during childhood. Maternal uncle Syed Ahmed Kabir who used to live near Makkah reared him up. The spirituality of Shahjalal developed there. One day, he gave Shahjalal a handful of soil and asked for going to Hidustan with a mission for preaching Islam. He also told him to choose a place, soil of which is found similar to the sample. One *Chashni Peer*, a saint and one of the companions of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) was entrusted with the task of comparing the soil. The *Chashni Peer* found the soil of Sylhet similar to the soil as they were carrying. Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) breathed his last while he was in *Sejdah* and performing his *Johar* prayer on a day in the year 1340, according to the historians. A number of personal articles used by the great saint himself are still preserved in the Dargah area in Sylhet.



Thousands visit the mazar of great saint Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) and pray at the mosque attached with it every day. — Photo: Courtesy M H Rahman

Female workers being deprived of due wages

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Feb 25: Female day labourers in the district are being deprived of their due wages as they are getting less than those of male day labourers.

A male worker gets Tk 70 to Tk 80 a day, while a female labourer gets only Tk 40 to Tk 50 for the same job.

The women workers are working in crop fields, kilns and construction sites along with male labourers.

According to an unofficial estimate, nearly 10 thousand women are working as day labourers. Most of the women are either widows or divorcees.

Two women commit suicide in Netrakona

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Feb 25: Two women committed suicide in Kendua thana of the district last week.

Police said Masuda Akter, 14, of village Walearpur under Kendua municipality committed suicide by hanging herself.

The cause of the suicide could not be known. The body was sent to Netrakona Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

In separate incident, Zahura Khatun, 40, wife of Tara Mah, of village Shibpur under Kendua thana, committed suicide also by hanging herself.

A UD case was filed with police this connection.

Book fair in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Feb 25: A week long book fair to mark the International Mother Language Day began in local Shilpakala Academy premises on Monday.

The deputy commissioner formally inaugurated the fair, which featured a total of 16 stalls.

The fair organisers also chalked out elaborate programmes on the occasion. The programmes included children's art competition, poetry recitation and music competition.

Body of youth recovered in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Feb 25: Body of a young man was recovered from a sugarcane field in Sadar thana recently.

The victim was identified as Kamal, 20, son of Mobarak of village Harora under Sadar thana.

Local people suspected that the youth was murdered. The body, however, was sent to hospital for autopsy.

A case was filed in this connection.

News snaps

Robbery in hatchery

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 25: Armed bandits looted valuables and cash from a hatchery in Kalatali area early Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police said the robbers equipped with sawed-off guns and pistols swooped on Seagull hatchery and looted valuables worth about Tk 5 lakh confining its two guards. Meanwhile, police detained the guards — Akram Hossain and Liton Mia — for interrogation.

Ammunition recovered

BARISAL, Feb 25: Police recovered 27 rounds of ammunition and four bottles of phenisidyl from the Gariarpur areas recently, reports BSS.

According to the source, acting on a secret information, the CID police raided the area and recovered the ammunition. None was arrested in this connection. Besides, police seized seven bottles of phenisidyl from a betel-leaf shop, opposite to the Saraswata Girls' School at Kalbari road and arrested one person in this connection, the source added.

Eye camp

JHALAKATHI, Feb 25: An eye camp began at the Begum Rajia Women's Madrasa in Nalchiti thana last week, reports UNB.

Jointly organised by National Blind Welfare Association and district Eye hospital, the camp will provide treatment facility and medicine to 400 patients free of cost. An eye specialist of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital Alauddin Ahmed conducted the first day of the camp. TNO of Nalchiti thana Hasan Mahmood, Deputy Director of Islamic Foundation Nour Mohammad Alam and Deputy Director of Imam Training Academy Murtaza Reza Harun were also present on the occasion.

Robbery committed

MANIKGANJ, Feb 25: Armed robbers looted cash, gold ornament and other valuables worth Tk three lakh from the house of a government official in the town last week, reports UNB.

Police said the gang, wearing black mask, broke into the house of PWD engineer Lokman Bhuiyan at 4 am through the window and tied up his son Shaheen. They looted cash Tk 24,000, 40 tolas of gold ornament and other valuables at gun point.

850 Forest Deptt cases pending

PANCHAGARH, Feb 25: A total of 850 cases of Forest Department, pending in different courts of greater Dinajpur district, cannot be disposed of simply for lack of necessary administrative steps, reports UNB.

According to officials, there are about 26,000 acres of forest in Thakurgaon, Dinajpur and Panchagarh districts. An organised gang of smugglers and some saw mill owners in collaboration with a section of dishonest forest officials were smuggling timber from the forest everyday depriving the government of huge revenue. Forest employees were suffering a sense of insecurity as a forest official was killed in an encounter with timber smugglers at Nababganj range in Dinajpur district recently. The sources said there are only 70 forest guards to guard the 26,000-acre forest in the three districts.



A Japanese Rotarian delegation led by Toyoji Yoshida visited the UNESCO Club Literacy Centre recently at Keraniganj.

Bandarban Thana OC dead

BANDARBAN, Feb 25: Nurul Islam, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Bandarban Sadar Thana died of heart attack here on Saturday. He was 45, reports BSS.

He left behind his parents, wife, two sons and a number of relations, well-wishers and admirers to mourn his death. According to official sources, he died at the Chittagong Railway Station while he was coming to Dhaka for family purpose. Later, his body was taken to Manikganj district of Shibaboy Thana for burial.

Chairman of Chittagong Hilltracts Development Board Bir Bahadur, MP, Chairman of Bandarban Hill District Council Thuaing Cha Prue Master, Deputy Commissioner Mohsin Ali Sardar, Birprotik, Superintendent of Police A G Kabir and local leaders including journalists expressed their profound shock at the death of police officer Nurul Islam.

Soft-loan for rural poor

JHALAKATHI, Feb 25: In an effort to alleviate poverty and improve the living standard of rural poor, a non-government organisation disbursed Tk 2.26 crore soft-loan here in last 28 months, reports UNB.

According to officials, the NGO, 'Asha', distributed the money among its 3,594 members in Rajapur, Nalchiti, Kathalia and sadar thana. The borrowers, mostly women, are utilising the loan in poultry farming, cow-fattening, pisciculture, nursery and small trades. During the period, the NGO also recovered Tk 84.87 lakh and the members have raised a deposit of Tk 19.36 lakh in share certificates.

Abducted girl rescued

MANIKGANJ, Feb 25: Police rescued a schoolgirl after three days of her abduction from a house in the town recently, reports UNB.

A gang of youths abducted the girl, a Class IX student of Balla Bandha High School, on way to her school. The father of the girl filed a case with Ghor thana after the abduction. Police arrested two people in connection with the abduction of the girl.

Science Fair in Bagerhat

BAGERHAT, Feb 25: A science fair, marking the Science and Technology Week-2000, began here on Sunday with 15 science clubs taking part in it, reports UNB.

State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain inaugurated the fair at a local school. Deputy Commissioner Syed Nurul Islam, Pol. The Super Mahboob Morshed and local elite were present in the inaugural programme.

Roads under construction

JHALAKATHI, Feb 25: Four roads are being reconstructed here at a cost of Tk 2 crore, reports UNB.

Officials said Jhalakathi-Kawkhali, Centrehat-Battalia-Pokkhali, Charakhali-Galua Chailis-Kahnla and Rajapur-Uttampur-Niamati roads are being reconstructed under the annual development programme.

Law and order improves

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 25: The overall law and order of the district has been taking a positive turn with the enforcement of Public Safety Act (PSA) 2000, reports BSS.

According to official statistics, the numbers of criminal offences significantly reduced in the district after the law came into force. There was no record of major crime after the operation of the law, police sources said. Some social organisations and NGOs welcomed the PSA 2000 for the sake of a terrorist-free society.

State of women, children reviewed

JAMALPUR, Feb 25: A meeting of the District Co-Ordination Committee on Prevention of Women and Child Oppression was held on February 17 at the Deputy Commissioner's office here, reports BSS.

M Abdul Bashar, Deputy Commissioner, presided over the meeting. The meeting reviewed the programme and work of the committee. The meeting was informed that till January this year forty-six cases were filed in police stations of the district. Of them, ten cases were given final report, twenty-one cases charge-sheeted and fifteen are under investigation. Public Prosecutor of Jamalpur, in his report, said that till January, one hundred seventy seven cases remained pending for trial in the court of district and sessions judges. The meeting later urged the persons concerned to deal with the matter with utmost care and speed.