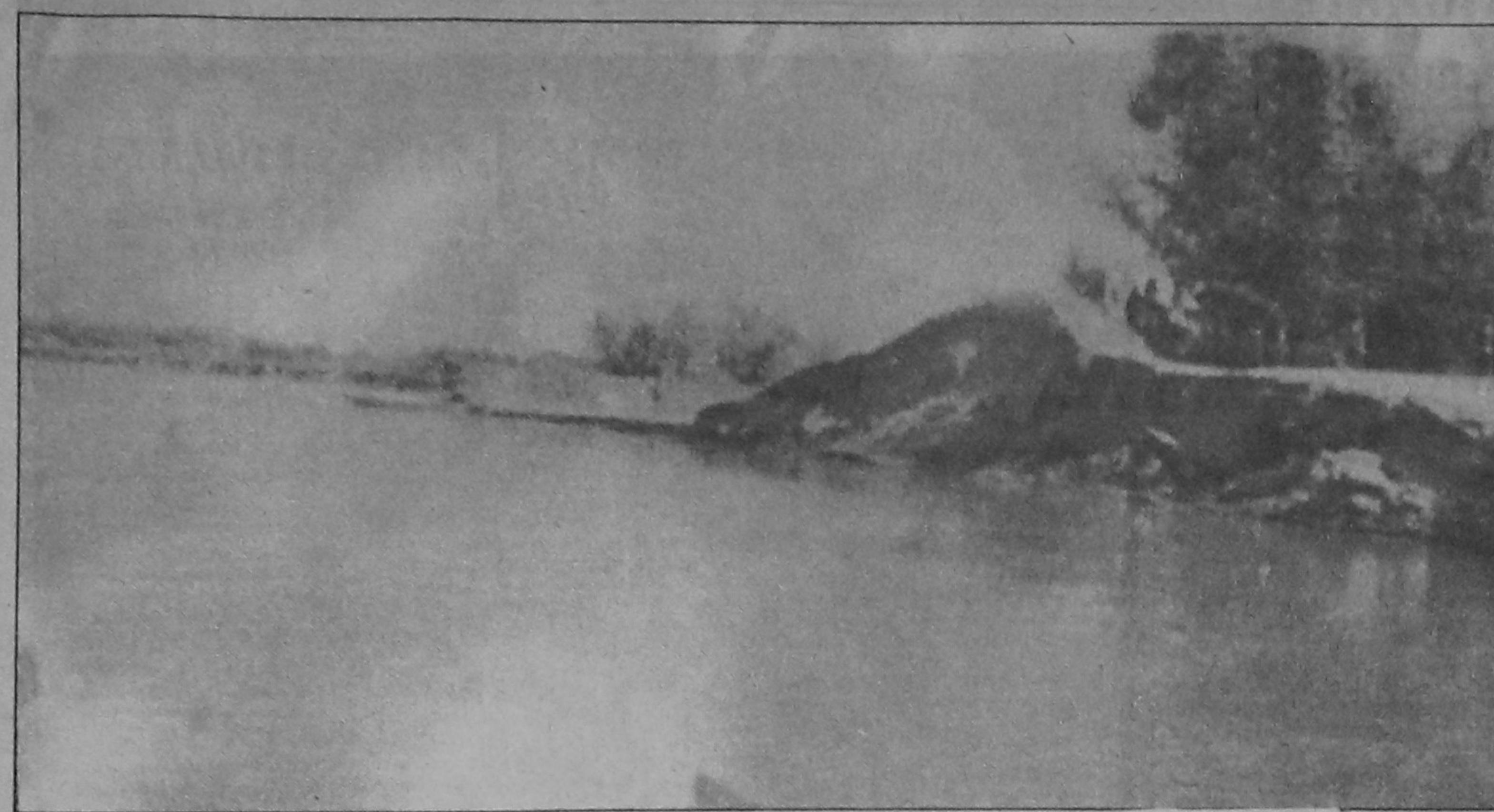


National



Living with natural disaster

An embankment along the River Brahmaputra in Roumari thana of Kurigram district has been threatened seriously due to river erosion.

Shortage of books hampers primary education in dists

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Feb 27: Primary students in the district have been facing acute shortage of books, hampering the academic activities.

According to the District Primary Education Office (DPEO) sources, Directorate of Primary and Mass Education earlier had instructed the authorities concerned to complete the distribution programme by January 27. But a large number of students in Moulvibazar district are yet to get books.

The government distributes books among primary students free of cost every year under Compulsory Primary Education programme.

Over two lakh students attend primary schools, both government and non-government,

in the district.

A headmaster of a primary school in the district headquarters said because of short supply all students are not getting books meant for distribution free of cost.

Guardians said they are anxious as two months of this year have already elapsed. In many schools, classes are yet to start.

When contacted District Primary Education Officer Abdul Khaleque Shikder told this correspondent some private publication houses were entrusted with the duty to supply books to the authorities, but they failed to supply in the stipulated time, causing scarcity of books.

He, however, expressed the

hope that the problem would be solved soon.

Our Netrokona correspondent adds: Books meant for distribution among primary students free of cost are being sold in black markets.

Books printed with 'Not for Sale' have almost flooded local markets, but students are not receiving books from the authorities concerned, said guardians. Students have been facing acute shortage of books, they added.

UNB from Jhenidah adds: Academic activities in different primary schools in six thanas of the district are seriously being hampered for lack of teachers.

According to competent

sources, 61 posts of teacher in government primary schools in rural areas have long been lying vacant.

The schools have got 1747 teachers out of their 1,808 sanctioned posts.

More worrying is that many schoolteachers prefer staying in mafasid towns rather than going to remote areas.

According to government rules, there should be one teacher for every 50 students, but the ratio is higher in municipality areas while many rural schools have only 2-3 teachers for 300-400 students.

Villagers alleged most headmasters perform more outside jobs during school hours than their official duties, affecting academic activities.

Bio-fertiliser developed by BINA gains popularity

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, Feb 27: The use of Bio-fertiliser developed by Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) has gained popularity among the farmers of the country.

As the price of this fertiliser is low and it increases produc-

tion and qualitative value of crops, the farmers are being interested day by day to use Bio-fertiliser in their crop fields to grow leguminous crops-lentil, groundnut, bean, cowpea, black gram, chickpea and soyabean.

Bio-fertiliser not only increases the fertility of crop lands but also increases water holding capacity of the land. This is easily applicable, keeps the environment favourable and not harmful to human life.

Now this fertiliser is being used by the farmers of the district. It is supplied to the farmers at a low price. The fertiliser is mixed with peat, a kind of soil BRAC has also approved the fertiliser for demonstration in the farmers' fields. Extensive field trials by BINA have shown yield increase to the extent of 20-40 per cent due to use of this rhizobial Bio-fertiliser.

BINA conducted various training programmes including farmers training courses on use of Bio-fertiliser that created enthusiasm for using this fertiliser among the farmers, especially among the poor and marginal farmers. This is because the fertiliser costs low price.

Soon Bio-fertiliser will be marketed in the whole country in large scale by a manufacturing company who made an agreement with BINA.

Dr MA Sattar, Principal

Scientific Officer of BINA and In-Charge of Bio-fertiliser Research team told The Daily Star that to speed up the rapid growth of plants Urea is used in crop lands. He also said that this fertiliser is costly, great consumers of fossil energy and partly responsible for pollution of water bodies.

Dr Sattar also told this correspondent that they had been doing research work to find out ways of growing plants which would not need such heavy amount of Urea fertiliser, but which would give good yield.

After researching over role of different kind of bacteria which live in symbiosis with leguminous plants.

Some farmers of sadar thana told this correspondent that they have been using Bio-fertiliser and gaining more production. The price is low in comparison with Urea. Farmers have also learnt the method of producing Bio-fertiliser taking training from BINA.

Sylhet Education Board starts functioning

SYLHET, Feb 27: Newly set up Sylhet Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board has started its formal functioning in a rented house, reports UNB.

Corruption hits procurement drive of Aman

NATORE, Feb 27: Farmers in the district are found discouraged to sell Aman paddy and rice to government procurement centres because of corruption and delay in payment, reports UNB.

Procurement in the district began on December 15 last year in pursuance of the government policy of giving price support to the farmers and to build up a comfortable food stock.

Ershad Ali Mondal, a leading grower of Rashidpur village under Gurudaspur thana, told the news agency that the farmers are not interested to sell their rice and paddy to the government food godowns due to complexities of payment and malpractice in weighing.

Marginal and small farmers are compelled to sell their produce in the open market at distress price of Tk 250 to 265 per maund of paddy. They are to repay loan taken at the time of cultivation from the village moneylenders.

Taking the advantage of the situation middlemen are controlling the paddy and rice market. They are building up stock to sell at high price during the off season.

District Food Department has so far procured 875 metric tons of paddy and 2,050 metric tons of rice as against the target of 1,562 mts of paddy and 4,185 mts of rice.

Shaheed Minar at native village of Salam inaugurated

From Nurul Karim Majumder

FENI, Feb 27: After 48 years of Abdus Salam's martyrdom a memorial has been built at the native village of the language martyr.

The memorial built in the shape of the central *Shaheed Minar* was inaugurated at village Laxampur under Dangbuliyan thana of the district on February 21. Member of Parliament Joynal Hazari inaugurated the memorial on Laxampur High School premises at a function. Local people call the memorial as *Shaheed Minar*.

A discussion was held on the occasion. Presided over by Abdus Sobhan, brother of the great language hero, the function was addressed by Hazari as chief guest. Abdul Karim, another brother of the language martyr, and union parishad Chairman

Bodlur Rahman also spoke. Joynal Hazari MP provided the financial assistance for the construction.

Abdus Sobhan and Abdul Karim, two younger brothers of *Shaheed Salam*, told this correspondent they are really happy as the *Shaheed Minar* has been built in honour of the language martyr at his native village.

Meanwhile, the district administration accorded a reception to the members of *Shaheed Salam* in the town on February 23.

The language hero's brothers Abdus Salam and Abdul Karim and sister Balkater Nessa attended the reception. Deputy Commissioner Debashish Nag, Additional Deputy Commissioner Abul Kashem, among others, were present

Loan for development, cultivation

Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), Janata Bank (JB) and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB) will disburse loan for development, farm activities and small trading, report agencies.

The Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) has taken up a programme to distribute 48 crore 65 lakh taka as loan under special socio-economic development project in 10 Southwestern districts of the country during the current financial year.

According to an official source, out of the total loan 4 crore 13-lakh taka will be distributed in Jhenidah district, 3 crore 52 lakh in Jessor district, 8 crore 37 lakh in Magura district, 6 crore 94 lakh in Kushtia district, 2 crore 13 lakh in Chuadanga district, 4 crore 30 lakh taka in Meherpur district, 2 crore 77 lakh in Narail district, 3 crore 36 lakh in Bagerhat district, 3 crore 88 lakh taka in Satkhira district and 9 crore 25 lakh taka in Khulna district.

Distribution of loan has already begun and will be continued till June next.

The loan is being utilised for creating job opportunities of rural women, setting up of small and cottage industries, women entrepreneurship development programme, rearing of cattle and poultry farms under poverty alleviation programme, beef fattening, production oriented activities and development of landless and

marginal farmers in the rural areas of these districts.

In Kishoreganj, Janata Bank will disburse farm loan amounting to Tk 6.12 crore this fiscal (1999-2000).

Officials said the bank has started distribution of the farm credit through its 14 branches and it will continue till March 31.

Of the loan, Tk 5.95 crore will be disbursed for cultivating *Boro* crops, Tk 10 lakh for wheat, Tk 3 lakh for potato, Tk 2 lakh for mustard and nut, Tk 1 lakh for sugarcane and Tk 1 lakh for vegetable farming.

Janata Bank under its farm credit programme has disbursed Tk 5.52 crore in two districts.

The bank has distributed Tk 2.98 crore among farmers in four thanas of Madaripur district while Tk 2.54 crore in six thanas of Shariatpur district, officials said.

In Thakurgaon, Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB) has launched a 'Micro Savings Scheme' for small traders and professionals.

Officials said under the scheme, the small traders and businessmen could deposit Tk 25, Tk 50, Tk 75, Tk 100, Tk 150 and Tk 200 per week and will get the money after five years with an 8.5 per cent interest.

A weekly Tk 200 deposit will stand at Tk 57,712 after five years.

A similar scheme has also been introduced for teachers.

Cotton harvesting in full swing in Chuadanga

CHUADANGA, Feb 27: The harvesting of cotton in Chuadanga Zone of Bangladesh Cotton Development Board is in full swing and will continue till the end of this month, reports BSS.

According to an official source, during the current cotton cultivation season, a total of about 8,000 hectares were brought under cotton cultivation in this zone.

So far, about 70 per cent harvesting of cotton there have been completed.

About three and a half lakh maunds of cotton (including seed) worth over Taka one crore is expected to be produced in

this zone.

This zone consists of all the four thanas of Chuadanga district and Meherpur Sadar thana of Meherpur district.

Another report from Ranpur says: Cotton Development Board (CDB) has launched a drive to procure cottonseeds from the growers of its Rangpur-Dinajpur zone.

According to an official source, during the current cotton cultivation season, a total of about 8,000 hectares were brought under cotton cultivation in this zone.

The DG was addressing as chief guest at a reception programme organised by trainees and managing council of a training workshop for the heads of the secondary schools at Annada Government High School in Brahmanbaria on February 25.

The function was presided over by Abdus Rashid Sarker, District Education officer of Brahmanbaria while Dr Golam Rasul Miah, Director (Training) of Secondary and Higher Education Directorate, Director (Acting) of Secondary Education Development Project and Md. Shahzahan, Assistant Director of Secondary Education Development Project and co-ordinator of training course were special guests.

The function was addressed, among others, by Shaheen Akter, headmistress of Sarai Annada Government High School, AFM Osman Gani, headmaster of Brahmanbaria Annada Government High School, Md Abdul Karim, headmaster of Brahmanbaria Ideal High Academy.

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