



Sheer indifference of Rly authorities
Two compartments of inter-city Ekota Express train derailed in an accident near the home signal of Jamalpur Railway Station in 1991 causing a great loss. Since then the Railway authorities took no steps to salvage and shift the compartments to any railway workshop. This has created problems in plying of trains, as a track remains totally useless. This results in much inconvenience to passengers, as they have to wait for a longer period due to pressure of trains on the remaining tracks. — Star photo by Muhammad Ali

'Convert a valiant son's home into museum'

COMILLA, Mar 13: The ancestral home of Shaheed Dhirendranath Dutta, the valiant lawmaker who made supreme sacrifice for Bangla and Bangladesh now stands in an abandoned and dilapidated condition on the bank of Dharmoshagar River in

Retired primary school teacher killed

MUNSHIGANJ, Mar 13: A retired primary school teacher was killed at his residence at Boikhar village in Sadar thana recently, reports UNB.

Police recovered the body of Hashem Sikder, 71, from this residence in the morning. Police found torture marks on his neck and chest, and oozing of blood from his ears.

The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with Sadar police but none was arrested in this connection.

Comilla town, reports BSS.

People have urged the government to take steps to preserve the memories of the valiant son of the soil by converting his home into a museum.

"Immediate reconstruction and repair are needed to protect the house from natural decay", neighbours of late Dhirendranath said.

Local people said no one took any initiative to preserve the house. They said many people, including the intellectuals, pay tributes to the courageous role of the late lawmaker but hardly took step to preserve his earthly memories by shifting to other places.

Even during the turbulent days of 1971, the late lawmaker stayed in his house. On March 28, 1971 he was taken away by the Pakistani occupation forces. The Pak soldiers killed Dhirendranath and his son Dilip Dutta in a gruesome manner inside the cantonment.

In the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, Dutta had de-

manded soon after the establishment of Pakistan that Bangla should be state language of Pakistan.

After 23 years of Liberation War (in 1994), businessman AKM Aftabuddin Ahmed filed a civil cases in a local court claiming rights to the home. He told the court that relatives of late Dutta had finalised primary transfer agreements (Baina with Taka one lakh) but later declined to sell the property. The fate of the case is still uncertain.

Bids on sale sans band rolls

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Mar 13: The Government is being deprived of a huge amount of revenue due to malpractice of Bidi factory owners here, reports BSS.

Bidis are being sold in shops, hats and Bazaars here with impunity without band rolls.

Tale of telephone trauma

From Hossain Seraj

MAGURA, Mar 13: Telephone owners in Magura are paying through the nose as the fax and phone businessmen have gauged up with some unscrupulous employees of the BTB (Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board) here to run their very profitable illegal shops.

All most all the general subscribers in the districts have been paying three to four times more than the normal bill every month. "They are providing Ous with ghost bills off and on. We hardly make any NWD calls. But our monthly bills read that we did it regularly. Previously, the billings ranged between Taka 400-600, but it went up to Taka 4500 on one occasion," alleged Syed Azharul Haq, whose family owns this telephone line for more than three decades.

Investigation revealed that nearly 200 subscribers of Magura town have been getting very suspicious slim bills, thanks to their under-the-table dealings with the BTB officials. Of them, 65 owners run illegal telephone and fax business.

According to the BTB rules, one needs to deposit Taka 50 thousand as security money to run a phone-fax business. In reality, none of the shop owners deposits the security money as they can obtain personal security from a few corrupt BTB employees in exchange of a meagre monthly allowance.

Under a verbal contract, they receive Taka 2,000 to 2,500 per month and issue a bill of Tk 500 or 600 to the subscribers. And those who do not entertain them invariably get a ghost-

bill. The moneymaking authorities turn a deaf ear whenever a complaint is lodged. "It's an open secret that they are party to the unlawful affair. Whenever we approach the authorities concerned they appear nonchalant," complained another user.

Subscribers also alleged that the outgoing channels of Magura BTB remain always busy because of this unfair business. One hears an engage tone or a metallic noise most of the time when he or she dials 2 for Dhaka or any code of the nation wide dialling (NWD).

When contacted, Kartik Chandra Sarkar, Sub-Assistant Engineer of the Magura Telephone and Telegraph Board admitted that a faulty telecommunication system did exist. But when asked about the illegal telephone and fax business, he told this correspondent, "I have joined here a few days back. If anything happens like this it is beyond my knowledge. Stern action will be taken if anybody of my department found guilty."

But the illegal business is going on in full swing just under their nose. One can find numbers of shops at the MR Road, Sayed Ator Ali Road, Dhaka Road and Natun Bazar street. Telephones in ticket counters of various transport agencies at Magura bus stand are also being operated under this popular pact.

The magento board-system of Magura exchange was established in 1964 with 25 lines, which was extended up to 100 lines in 1970 under the Central

Battery (CB) System. In 1985, an automatic exchange with 400 lines was installed adjacent to the Microwave station at Magura suburb. Subsequently, it was turned into NWD system with 15 outgoing and 20 incoming channels. Three hundred new lines were included during the BNP rule while another 300 in the last fiscal year.

Although the lines got increased, users here are yet get the benefit of a digitalised telephone system. Due to the faulty telecommunication of analogue system subscribers have been coping with the inaudible sound, cross-connection and ghost-call all the time. Many subscribers complained, they hear two persons speaking at the same time from two different sets whenever they pick up their sets. Very often calls go to the wrong number causing financial loss to the caller and annoyance to the receiver. Sometimes a caller gets his desired number following four-five abortive attempts.

"I think digitalisation of our telephone system is the only solution to our problems. Digital system only can reduce the corruption, cross-connection and other problems we are now having," said Anu Mia, a leading businessman of Magura.

UNB from Kushtia reports: When the government emphasises rapid expansion of telecommunication network, the lone cardphone in Khoksa thana remained out of order.

Locals alleged that the cardphone went out of order within days of its installation and none bothered to restore its service.

No monument yet for Satkhira martyrs

SATKHIRA, Mar 13: December 7 is a red letter day in the history of the district as on that day in 1971, the freedom fighters returned home victorious, freeing Satkhira from the clutches of the Pakistani occupation forces, reports BSS.

To the rejoice of the fellow countrymen who remained at their hearts and homes during the nine months of the Liberation War, the victorious freedom fighters entered the district, waving the national colours after defeating the occupation forces in about 50 armed encounters.

Bhokra in Satkhira district was the first camp under sector 8 and 9 during the liberation where a training camp was set up with the support of the members of the then East Pakistan Rifles to train youths on guerrilla warfare. The camp was attacked by the Pakistani occupation forces on April 29, 1971. In a 17 hours long face to face armed encounter, the attacking army lost several lives while three of the freedom fighters embraced martyrdom.

The valiant freedom fighters of the area imbued with the highest spirit of patriotism launched final assault on the occupation forces in November, 1971 on Shamnagar-Kaliganj front. Another party of the sector under the leadership of Muhith Khan Dulu jumped into operation at Bethor Danga in Dhulihar union. Cornered by the onslaughts of the freedom fighters, the Pakistani occupation forces started decamping from Satkhira from December 7, 1971.

The freedom fighters unit under Dulu's leadership rushed to Satkhira and set up a camp at PN High School. Another regular unit of freedom fighters, led by Capt Huda, took position at Primary Training Institute near Dak Banglow. The third group, led by freedom fighter Abdullah, set up frontline within the town.

Being encircled by three pronged attacking positions, the Pakistani occupation forces retreated from Satkhira taking the army column to Jessore Cantonment. And thus Satkhira was recaptured from the occupation forces by the hoisting of Bangladesh national flag. Satkhira lost many valuable lives during the nine months' long Liberation War.

The fiercest battle in Satkhira front during the war was fought on early morning of June 7, 1991 at Town Sripur in Devhata thana. The plan of the freedom fighters to pierce through Pakistani position there was somehow leaked out to the enemy. Yet the freedom fighters with great bravery faced the Pakistani soldiers launching a three pronged attack on them coming out from Taki camp. A freedom fighters group, led by Capt Shahjahan Master, took position at town Sripur on night of June 6. But the freedom fighters with minimum battle gears in their support and exhausted by several sleepless nights on their way to the frontline from the camp came under a surprise attack from the occupation army while asleep or having breakfast. But having been fortified with indomitable courage and urge for freedom, they replied the attack with great acumen. A few members of the attacking Pakistani army were killed in the encounter, but the freedom fighters lost seven of their comrades including Kajol, Khokon, Narayan and student of Engineering College.

While refreshing his memory of the encounter, Ershad Khan Habloo, who received several bullet injuries, recalled the valiant role of Kamrul Islam Khan who had arrested Pakistani collaborator sub-divi-

sional officer of Satkhira Hakim Khaled Mahmud, hoisted Bangladesh flag at the SDO office by lowering the Pakistani flag and setting it to fire and collecting money from Satkhira branch of the then National Bank of Pakistan to finance the war expenditures.

Those who will be remembered by the present generation and posterity for their bold role in the National Liberation War in Satkhira area included Kamrul Islam Khan, Ayub Ali Salam, Habloo and A S M Babar Ali.

Freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for freeing their motherland during the Liberation War in the area included Hafizuddin, Nur Hossain, Mohammad, Abu Bakr, Emadul Hoq, Zakaria, Shahadat Hossain, Abdur Rahman, Aminuddin, Gazi, Abul Kalam Azad, Sushil Kumar, Lokman Hossain, Abdul Wahab, Dadul Ali, A B M Nazmul Abedin, Samsuzzoha Khan, Sirajul Islam, Munsur Ali, Sheikh Ruhul Amin, Sadeb Ali and Sheikh Harun ar Rashid.

The valiant of all, Capt Master is also no more.

The martyr freedom fighters sacrificed their present for our future, but we failed to protect and preserve their graveyards and also the monuments constructed momentarily and spontaneously by the people. Habloo said.

—BSS Feature

200 tubewells to be installed in Pirojpur

PIROJPUR, Mar 13: Public Health Department will install 200 tubewells in four thanas of the district this fiscal at a cost of Tk one crore, reports UNB.

They said 50 tubewells would be installed in Sadar thana while 50 each in Bhandaria, Mathbaria and Swarupkati thanas by June.

Upon completion of the project, over 2 lakh people in the four thanas would get pure drinking water facility.

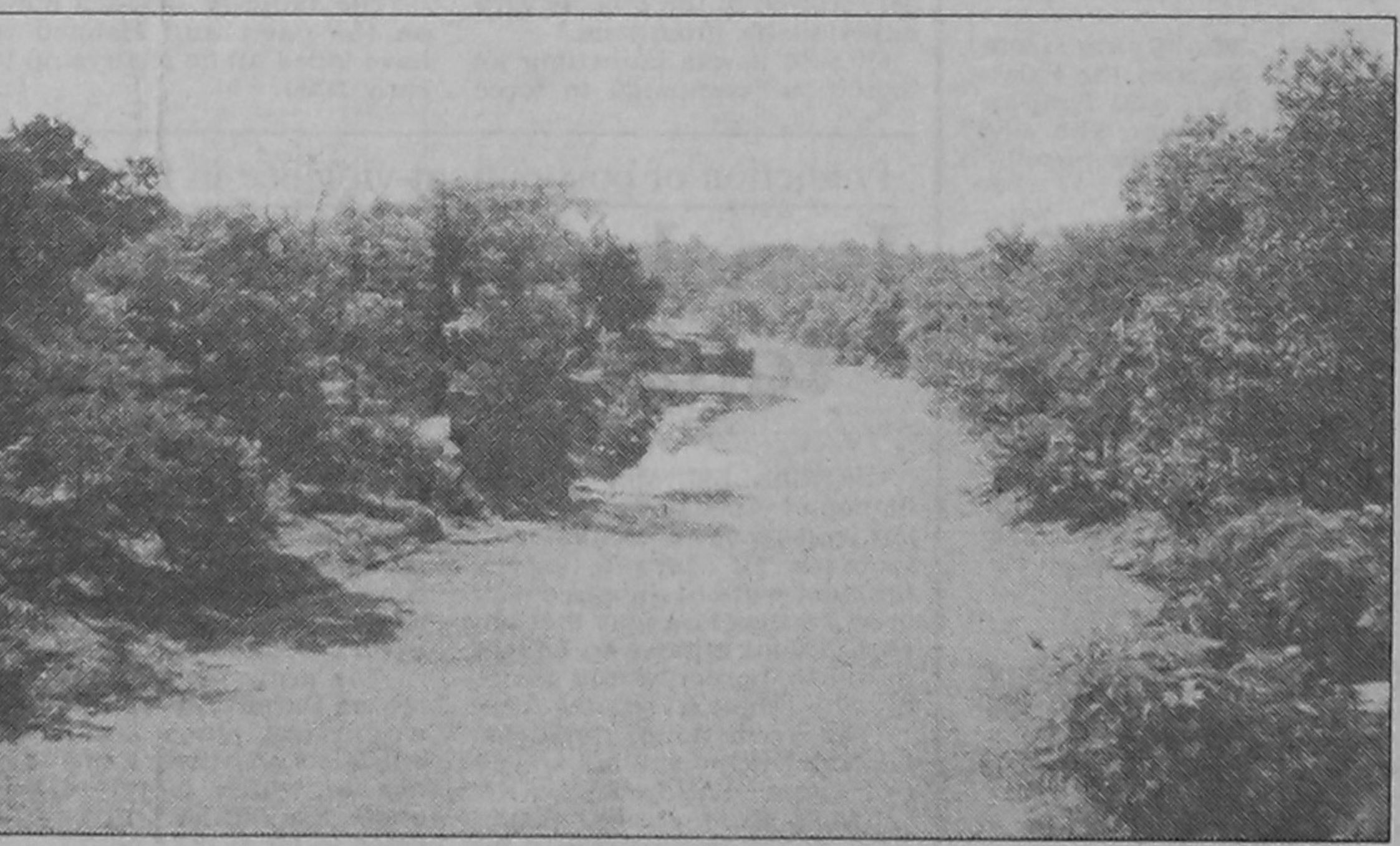
Besides, the Public Health Department with financial assistance from Dutch government will install a one-km pipeline in the municipality area spending Tk 6 lakh.

BSS from Meherpur says: A total of 475 hand pump tubewells have, so far, been installed in two thanas of the district by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED).

The tubewells have been installed to ensure supply of pure drinking water for the poor rural people of the district.

According to an official source, of the total 275 tubewells have been installed in Gangni thana and 200 in Sadar thana.

Over one lakh poor people of the two thanas of the district are now getting drinking water every day through these hand pump tubewells.



Save the River Katakhal

The River Katakhal flows through Sirajganj town. Eliote Bridge connects both sides of the river. The river has been doing a lot in maintaining the environmental balance and protecting the public health. But now-a-days many influential persons in collaboration with the municipality staffers are allegedly grabbing parts of the river. Authorities concerned should take immediate measures to stop immediately such alarming trend.

— Star photo by Akhteruzzaman Bablu

News snaps

Fertiliser crisis worsens

NAOGAON, Mar 13: When farmers have embarked on a massive boro farming here, price hike of urea caused by short supply has dampened their enthusiasm, reports UNB.

Officials said dealers of the northern region have also stopped lifting urea from Santahar buffer stock from March 1 over a dispute with the authorities, worsening the fertiliser crisis. Taking advantage of the situation, a section of unscrupulous traders have raised the urea price, forcing the growers to pay Tk 15-20 more per bag of urea. When asked the dealers said they stopped lifting urea as the authorities turned down their demand for coarse granule of urea, which has better demand among the farmers. Meanwhile, Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture Extension and president of Fertiliser Dealers' Association in the northern region visited Santahar buffer stock and had a meeting with the officials on Thursday. But the meeting ended inconclusively.



Juvenile artistes render song at a function organised on the occasion of International Mother Language Day in Gaibandha. — Star photo

Spoiled son handed over to police

THAKURGAON, Mar 13: As his all exhorting went in vain, a worried father last of all has handed over his spoiled son to police, reports UNB.

Abdul Halim, chairman of Jagannathpur Union Parishad, caught his son Ratan, 22, red-handed from Khochabari hat while collecting toll from shopkeepers and handed him over to police. Ratan, an accused in several cases, was sent to jail.

Special programme

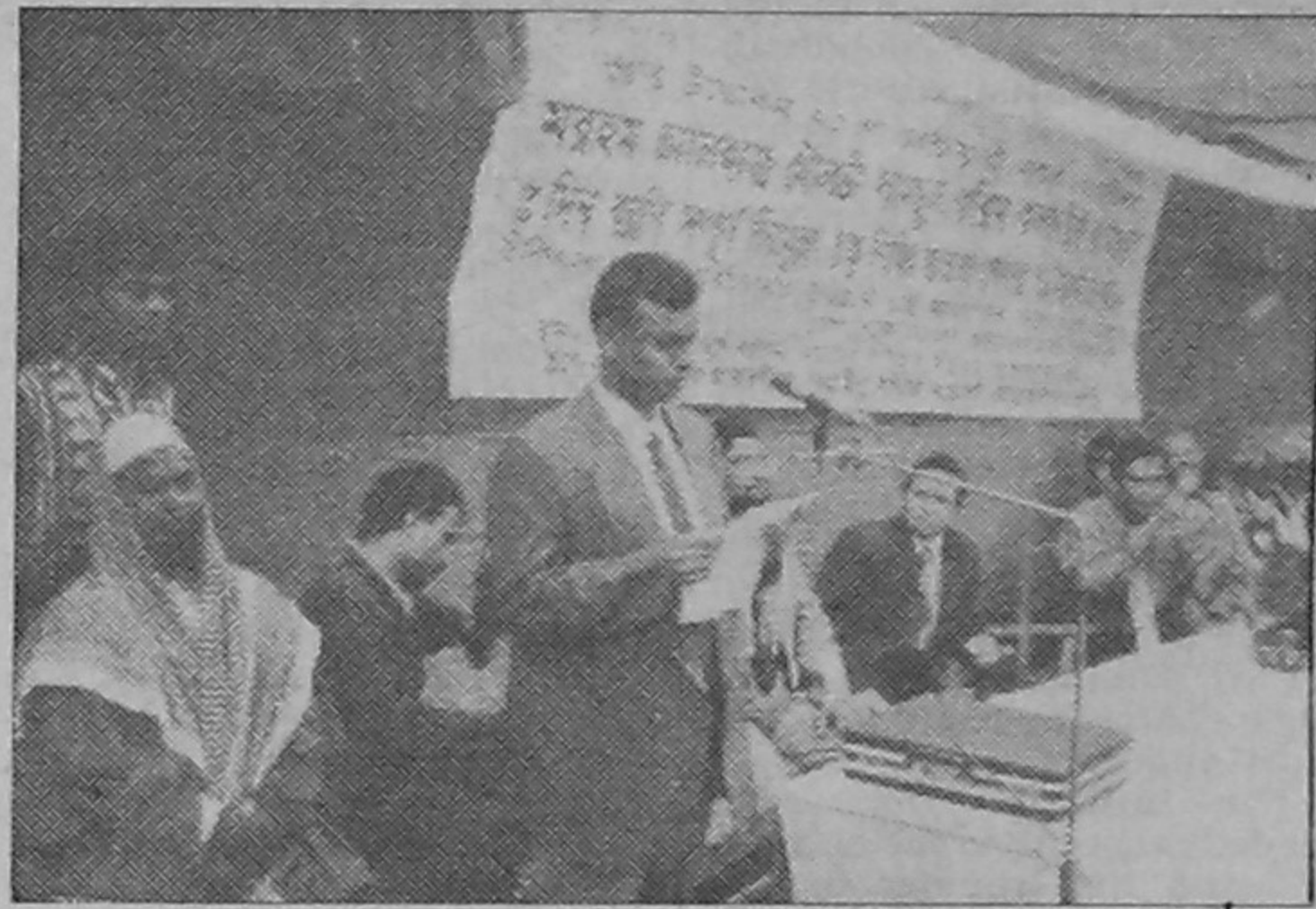
JHALAKATI, Mar 13: Department of Agriculture Extension has undertaken a special programme here to ensure women's participation in agriculture, reports UNB.

Under the programme, 142 women have already been imparted training on modern methods of agriculture and they set up 74 demonstration plots of various crops. They have also been familiarised with preservation techniques of seeds and seasonal fruits.

Erosion renders 2.5 lakh homeless

SHARIATPUR, Mar 13: Natural calamities like riverbank erosion and cyclone led over 2.5 lakh people homeless in five districts of greater Faridpur during the last 25 years, reports BSS.

These homeless people have been living in a sub-human condition for lack of shelter, work and food. The government sponsored VGF card programme and loan by some NGOs at high interest rate could not improve their condition. According to a local NGO (Shariatpur Development Organisation), some 10,000 families lost their homes due to erosion by the Meghna and the Padma rivers in five districts of greater Faridpur during the period. In another survey, the NGO found that about 5000 families were rendered homeless by cyclones during the last 25 years. Marginal farmers and poor weavers are among the victims.



Nurul Amin Fareeq, Vice Chairman of Moulvi Shamsul Karim Kalyan Trust, addressing the inaugural function of a five-day free eye camp at Chhagalniya in Feni recently.

Seminar

SYLHET, Mar 13: Information Secretary M Akmol Hossain on Saturday said the Bangladesh are a brave nation, which they have proved on many occasions including the country's War of Liberation, different democratic movements and during natural disasters, reports BSS.

"The Bangladeshes have proved their courage and bravery by facing the century's worst devastating flood in 1998 under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," he said while addressing a seminar on "The Management of Earth Quake and Sylhet region" here. Presided over by the Chairman of Sylhet Municipality Badar Uddin Kamran, the seminar was also addressed, among others, by Secretary to the Relief and Disaster Management Ministry Azad Ruhul Amin, Azizul Malik Chowdhury, Ahsan Chowdhury, Jamil Chowdhury, Sajedur Rahman, Dr Abdul Awal Biswas, Farooq Ahmed, Nazmul Haque and Jamila Akhter. Sylhet Municipality, CARE Bangladesh and Grameen Janokallyan Sangstha organised the seminar.

Alleged smuggler arrested

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 13: BDR Jawsans arrested a man along with a huge contraceptive pills and cements from Leda area in Teknaf thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

The arrested was identified as Hamid Hossain, 31, son of Lal Mia, of Nayapara Muchhni village. Hamid was smuggling out 83,500 strips of contraceptive pills and 99 bags of cement worth about Tk 13 lakh to neighbouring Myanmar. He was sent to the Teknaf jail. The goods were later deposited to the Customs Department. A case was filed with the police.

Bodies of Bangladeshis returned

LALMONIRHAT, Mar 13: Bodies of three Bangladeshis nationals, killed by Indian BSF at Chandrapur village in Kaliganj thana on Thursday, were returned to BDR officials after a flag meeting on Saturday morning, reports UNB.

Commander of 27 Rifle Battalion of Daikhowa camp Nayek Subader Saidur Rahman led the Bangladesh side while Company Commander of 109 BSF Battalion of Kaitabari Camp headed the Indian side at the flag meeting held at border pillar No. 912. BDR officials later handed over the decomposed bodies of Joydal, Khalil and Sirajul to their families as BSF returned them after 43 hours of the killings. The bodies were buried at their family graveyards after namaj-e-janaza at Khamarbhathi Primary School premises.

Rally in support of PSA

KHULNA, Mar 13: A huge procession was brought out in the city on Saturday congratulating President of Bangladesh Awami League Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for enacting Public Safety Act (PSA), reports BSS.

Organised jointly by Khulna city and district unit of Awami League and its front organisations, the procession was led by State Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Awami League Central Leader Mannujan Sufian MP, Kazi Sekandar Ali Dalim MP and President of Khulna District Awami League and former Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Harun-or-Rashid. A large number of Awami League leaders and workers including many from the front organisations participated in the procession.