

National

Six injured as smugglers, train attendants clash

From Our Correspondent
SIRAJGANJ, Sept 15: At least six people were injured as a group of smugglers and some attendants of a train clashed on board the train at Ishwardi under Pabna district on Monday.

Railway police sources and witnesses said when the smugglers wanted to carry contraband in the Sundarban Express Mail the attendants agreed in exchange for certain amount of money. But later they locked in row over the amount of money and the attendants threw the smuggled goods from the train. Enraged bootleggers, numbering about 20, stormed the train and started beating up the attendants.

Railway police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. A case was lodged, but none was arrested.

Aborigines demonstrate

From Our Correspondent
SIRAJGANJ, Sept 15: A group of aboriginal people on Sunday at village Chottrohati under Ullapara upazila brought out a procession protesting the alleged move to grab their land.

They said Ram Kishnoper UP Chairman Altaf Hossain and his men are trying to grab their land. They also said sections of people are causing hindrance even to their movement in the locality.

Discussion

From Our Correspondent
NETRAKONA, Sept 15: A discussion on 'Reforming Present Electoral System' was held at Netrakona Press Club recently under the auspices of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) of Netrakona district unit.

President of district unit of FEMA Advocate Ruhul Amin presided over the meeting. Among others, President of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity of Netrakona district unit Hider Jahan Chowdhury and General Secretary of Netrakona unit of FEMA Pranash Chandra Majumdar took part in the discussion.

Idrish murder in Netrakona: None arrested

From Our Correspondent
NETRAKONA, Sept 15: Police are yet to arrest anyone in connection with Idrish murder, although two months have elapsed. Idrish Ali of village Ghaghnapara, under Purbadhala upazila of the district was killed by a group of unidentified assailants in broad daylight on July 2. The assailants beheaded him. After getting information police recovered the beheaded body and sent it to Netrakona Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

HYV cucumber may be produced in Jhenidah



The Block Supervisor of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Saikiupa, Jhenidah, Ahmed Ali produced High Yielding Variety of cucumbers in the yard of his home this season. Photo shows wife of Ahmed Ali taking care of one of the cucumbers. —Star photo

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Sept 15: High Yielding Variety (HYV) of cucumber may be produced in Jhenidah, a field level worker of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) proved it.

Ahmed Ali, Block Supervisor of DAE Saikiupa upazila office informed that he collected some seeds of cucumber from a farmer last year. He sowed the seeds at his home and one of his cucumber plant produced about 40 fruits. Maximum weight of a fruit was 4.5 kg which attracted the local people. The cucumber was 19 inches in length and 15 inches in diameter.

Ahmed Ali informed that the taste of his cucumber was good and it contained least quantity of seeds. When contacted with Abdul Awal, Deputy Director of DAE, Jhenidah said that the variety was available in hill areas where the tribal people cultivate the cucumber on commercial basis. It may be cultivated in Jhenidah, Magura, Chuadanga, Meherpur and some other parts in large scale and it may help the farmers a lot to survive.

Jamalpur farmers in misery

From Muhammad Ali

JAMALPUR, Sept 15: Most of the farmers in 1,362 villages of 68 unions in seven upazilas of Jamalpur district are facing economic hardship.

Farmers are not getting fair prices of their products. Taking advantage of their economic condition some dishonest and unscrupulous money lenders are doing brisk business by giving loan at higher rates of interest.

The farmers are compelled to sell their crops to the money lenders in advance at a very cheap rate to take preparation for coming Aman and winter vegetables cultivation.

Farmers are being compelled to procure their daily necessities in exchange of rice and the prac-

tice is offering the Farihs (middlemen) the chance to bring down the price level of rice to a rock bottom level.

In Jamalpur district farmers of the rice producing areas of Sadar, Islampur, Malendah, Madergonj, Bakshigonj and Sarisabari upazilas have fallen prey to unscrupulous farihs.

Farmers in some places attributed the situation to non-intervention by the government in purchasing paddy. In many places a maund of paddy is being sold at Taka 190 to Taka 200 while in case of barter deals, farmers are getting a maximum Taka 170.

The government has set up a

target of procuring only two lakh tons of paddy in the current season against last year's target of 3.50 lakh tons. Procurement price this year has also been revised downwards from Taka 220 to Taka 210 per maund.

The decision came as a blow to the country's farmers specially when the government has withdrawn almost all the subsidies from agriculture inputs, according to local farmers.

Meanwhile, as fertiliser prices have gone up because of withdrawal of subsidy as well as absence of fair price of farms' productions, farmers apprehend a drastic fall on the output of high yielding variety paddy in the next season. Some quarters even

fear production may drop by about 50 percent.

Monsur Ali of village Char Polsha under Islampur upazila said he had earmarked only 10 bighas for cultivation of HYV paddy for the next season instead of 30 bighas last season.

Majority of the farmers in the village have told this correspondent that this year they had planned to cut the area of land for growing HYV paddy popularly known as BR 16.

Farmers said total expenditure including the cost of fertiliser and irrigation for growing each maund of HYV paddy is about Taka 180 while the current market price of rice is Taka 220 per maund.

Three commit suicide in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Sept 15: Three people committed suicide by taking poison in Sadar upazila recently. Jesmin, 22, daughter of Habibur Rahman Sheikh of village Bedgram, committed suicide by taking poison on August 14.

According to family sources, the woman killed herself, as her father wanted to marry her off without her consent. Her body was sent to hospital for autopsy. Rekha Rani Biswas, 30, wife of Sunil Biswas of village Korpara, took poison on August 15. She died way to hospital.

According to neighbours, the woman committed suicide following altercation with her husband. The husband often created pressure on her to bring dowry from her parents' house, the neighbours added. Mahatab Molla, 28, committed suicide by taking poison at village Malanga on August 17. The youth killed himself following altercation with his parents. Separate UD cases were lodged.

Progress of cases being hampered

From Our Correspondent

KUSHITIA, Sept 15: Progress of cases lying with several courts here is being hampered as summons notices are not served on witnesses in time. There is allegation that policemen are reluctant to hand over the notices to the people concerned. Some dishonest policemen allegedly do not serve notices in exchange for 'underhand deal' with the accused. Sources with courts said this malpractice is common in most loan defaulting case. Summons notices are served on people concerned during trial of cases through policemen of different police stations.

2 injured members of outlawed party die

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 15: Two members of an outlawed party arrested after a gunfight with police yesterday at Dulachar in Bera upazila of Pabna district succumbed to bullet injuries in the early hours today.

Two children drown

From Our Correspondent

MEHERPUR, Sept 15: Two minor children drowned in separate ponds in Meherpur Sadar Upazila recently, police sources said, reports BSS.

Jahangir Hossain, 11, of Meherpur College para went to play by the side of a pond. Suddenly he slipped and fell into the pond. Shanta, 3, of Amjhupi village under Meherpur Sadar Upazila drowned in a pond when she was playing by the side of the pond.

Wheat for FWP

BOGRA, Sept 15: A total of 4,443 tonnes of wheat has been allocated towards test relief and Food for Works Programme (FWP) for Bogra district during the current financial year, reports BSS.

Official sources said, the works on this programme would begin from November. The food for works programme includes reconstruction of roads, excavation of derelict ponds and earth works in the premises of mosques, schools and colleges.

Fodder crisis

KISHOREGANJ, Sept 15: Fodder crisis has taken a serious turn in haor areas, particularly in Itna, Mitamain, Nikli, Bhairab, Tarail, Karimganj, and Bajitpur upazilas, reports UNB.

As there is no grazing field in the haor areas, straw has been the main fodder of cattleheads. This year, the farmers could not collect straw from boro paddy as the crop was damaged in flooding during the months of May and June. As a result, prices of oil cake, bran and chaff have gone up, forcing the farmers to sell their cattleheads at throwaway prices.

Tk 6.6 cr smuggled goods seized in 20 months

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Sept 15: Border forces Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) recovered smuggled goods worth about Taka 6.6 crore from different parts of the district in the last 20 months till August 23.

During the period, BDR personnel also arrested 28 people in connection with smuggling and lodged more than six hundred cases.

BDR sources said smuggled goods valued at Tk 2.73 crore were seized in 1999 while goods worth Tk 3.86 crore till August this year.

The seized goods, which include sugar, saree, powdered milk, phenisyl syrup, cosmetics, shaving cream, blade, spices and spare parts of vehicles, were deposited with district customs office.

BAU workshop

Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) Professor Md Anwarul Islam has called upon researchers and agriculture scientists to work hard for the overall agricultural development of the country, says a press release.

The VC was inaugurating a two-day annual workshop on BAU Research Progress on the campus on September 6.

Organised by the Bangladesh Agricultural University Research System (BAURES), the inaugural function was presided over by BAURES Director Professor Abdur Rahman. Professor Dr Lutfor Rahman, Dean of Faculty of Agriculture, presented an article entitled 'Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development: BAU Approach'.

Held at the BAU Shilpacharya Zaimul Abedin Auditorium, the inaugural function was also addressed by others, by Professor Dr Md Rafiqul Haque and Professor Dr Md Sultan Uddin Bhuiyan.

Three killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, Sept 15: Three passengers were killed on the spot and 30 others injured when a passenger bus 'Surma' skidded off the road and fell into a ditch near Saherpara, five miles off Kachua upazila recently.

Eight unnatural deaths in Feni

FENI, Sept 15: Eight unnatural deaths were reported in the district recently, reports UNB.

Police identified the victims as Abdur Rouf, 55, Nooruddin, 22, Swapan, 18, Osman Gani Sumon, 18, Touhidunnesa Mitu, 23, Shahidulla, 30, and Rasheda Akhtar, 30. The identity of another man, aged about 35, could not be known.

Police said Abdur Rouf was hacked to death by his fellow-villagers at Purba Chhagalnaiya village in Chhagalnaiya upazila on Sept 7 following a minor dispute.

Nooruddin allegedly committed suicide by taking poison at Chhotto Ahmedpur in Daganbhuiyan upazila on Sept 4.

Swapan is also believed to have killed himself by taking poison at Purba Kachharpara on Sept 3.

On the same day, Osman died at Chhagalnaiya Health Complex as he took pesticide.

Besides, the body of the unidentified man was recovered from Lemua on Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

Police recovered the body of Mitu from her in-law's house at Chardubba village in Sonagazi upazila on Sept 2.

Mitu's family members accused her in-laws of pouring poison into her mouth as their demand for dowry went unheeded.

On Sept 1, police recovered the body of Shahidulla from Shibpur village in Sadar upazila.

The victim's wife alleged that brothers of Shahidullah beat him to death, as he demanded the money he sent to them from abroad earlier.

The body of Rasheda was recovered from a septic tank at village Charchandia in Sonagazi upazila on Aug 31.

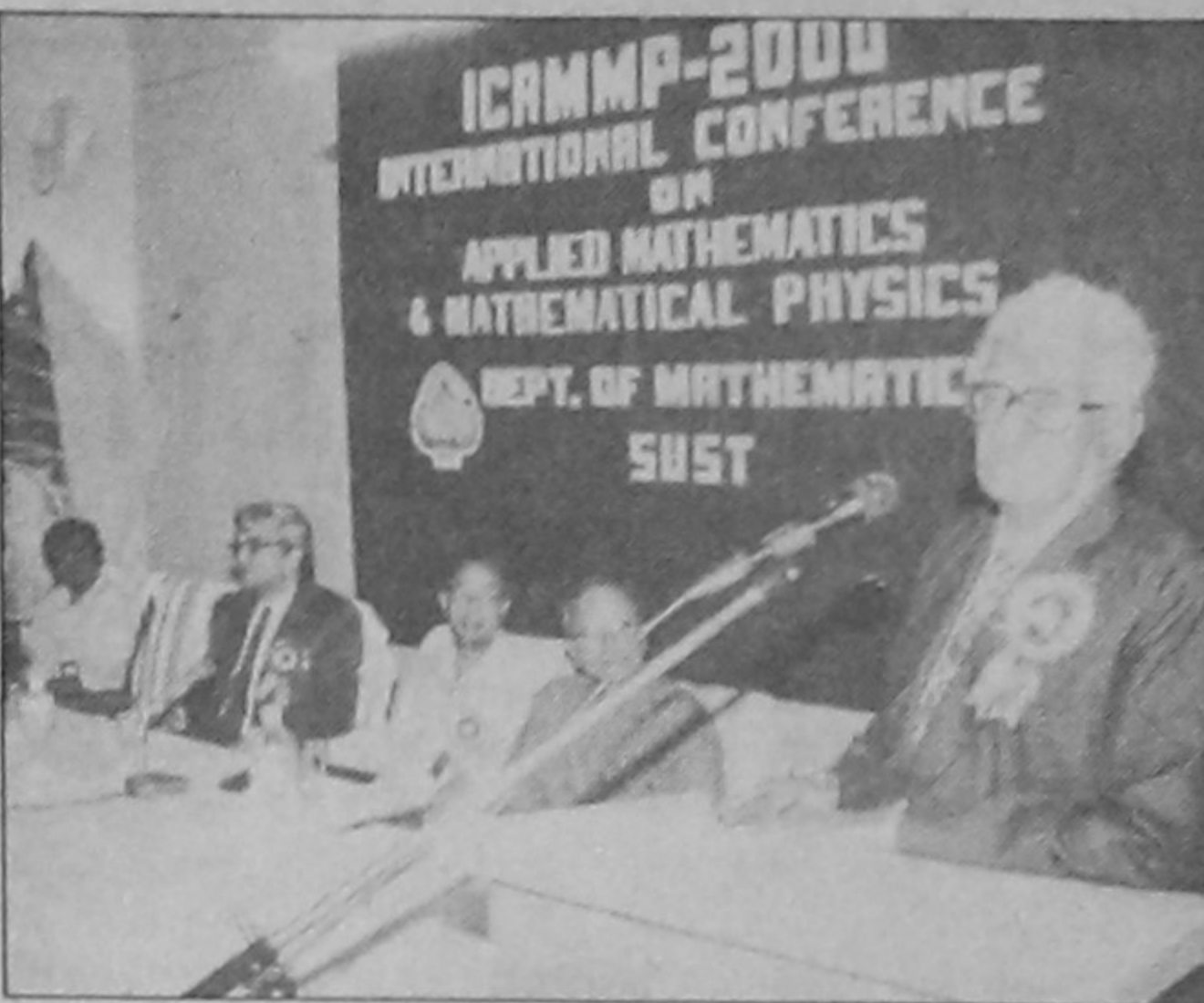
Separate cases were filed.

More health centres in 2 hill dists

RANGAMATI, Sept 15: Some 310 village centres, aiming to provide healthcare services to mothers and children, will be set up in Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts at a cost of Tk 10.88 crore, reports UNB.

Of the centres, 150 will be set up in Khagrachhari while 160 in Rangamati districts in the current fiscal with financial assistance from UNICEF, official sources said. The centres, to be set up under Chittagong Hill Tracts Integrated Social Development Project, will have arrangements for non-formal education for children in addition to health services for the mothers and children of 7,750 families.

News snaps



Prof N D Sengupta of Mumbai University, India, speaking recently at the inaugural function of the International Conference on Applied Mathematics and Mathematical Physics at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet. —Star photo

Construction of Diabetic Assoc

BOGRA, Sept 15: The construction of additional 25 bed Hospital of Diabetic Association, Bogra at a cost of Taka 3 crore 10 lakh is scheduled to be completed within December this year, reports BSS.

The construction committee headed by Deputy Commissioner Bogra is working earnestly to complete the work within the fixed period, said Executive Officer of the organisation the number of hospital beds will rise to 59 after completion of the construction. The extension work of Diabetic Hospital, Bogra has been undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as approved by ECNEC. An amount of Taka 2 crore 7 lakh has already been spent. The rest amount will be spent for purchase of apparatus of the hospital. The three storied building will be constructed with provision for lift service. Arrangement will also be made for the accommodation of the teachers in the next phase. A total of 16000 diabetic patients are registered in the hospital for treatment.

Advocacy meeting

BARISAL, Sept 15: An advocacy meeting for the representatives of the Water and Sanitation Programme was held here recently at the Caritas office premises, reports BSS.

Organised by the NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Programme, the meeting was presided over by Director of Caritas Paul D Kaster. Among others, Regional Director of Barisal Betar Ashraf Hui, PHED Engineer Lutfor Alam and Regional Director of Caritas Kazi Jahangir Kabir and Shishir Kumar Roy spoke on this occasion. A total of 30 NGO workers, journalists and organisational representatives took part in the advocacy meeting.

Young man hacked to death

BAGERHAT, Sept 15: A young man was hacked to death by his elder brother over cutting a tree at Bara Jamuria village in Morolganj upazila on Sunday, reports UNB.

Police said Sheikh Selim, 30, son of late Sheikh Abdul Quader died on the spot when his elder brother Sheikh Abdul Kalam, 40, hacked him with his axe after he protested the cutting of a tree. Local people said the two brothers had long dispute over the ownership of land. The body was sent to the morgue for autopsy.

Conspiracy slated

CHITTAGONG, Sept 15: State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Mohammad Nurul Islam on Sunday called upon the members of Awami Ulema League to foil the conspiracy of those who were misleading people in the name of religion, reports BSS.

Addressing a joint meeting of members of Awami Ulema League and Waqf Mutawallis at the circuit house here Maulana Islam said, a section of conspirators is out to create confusion among people by using religion for their personal gains. Members of Awami Ulema League will have to resist such elements in the greater interest of the nation, he added. The meeting, presided over by Muhammad Sharfuddin, leader of Waqf Mutawallis, was also addressed by Chittagong City Mayor AB M Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Bullets recovered

KHAGRACHHARI, Sept 15: In an early morning raid, plainclothes police recovered a quantity of huge bullets and arrested a man in this connection from the frontier town of Panchhari on Sunday, reports UNB.

Acting on the confessional statement of an arrested accused in Chittagong Detective Branch, police raided the betel-leaf stall of Bachha Mia and seized 169 rounds of bullet from the shop. They also arrested Bachha Mia, Hailing from Rangunia upazila of Chittagong district. Bachha had long been living in the hill town.

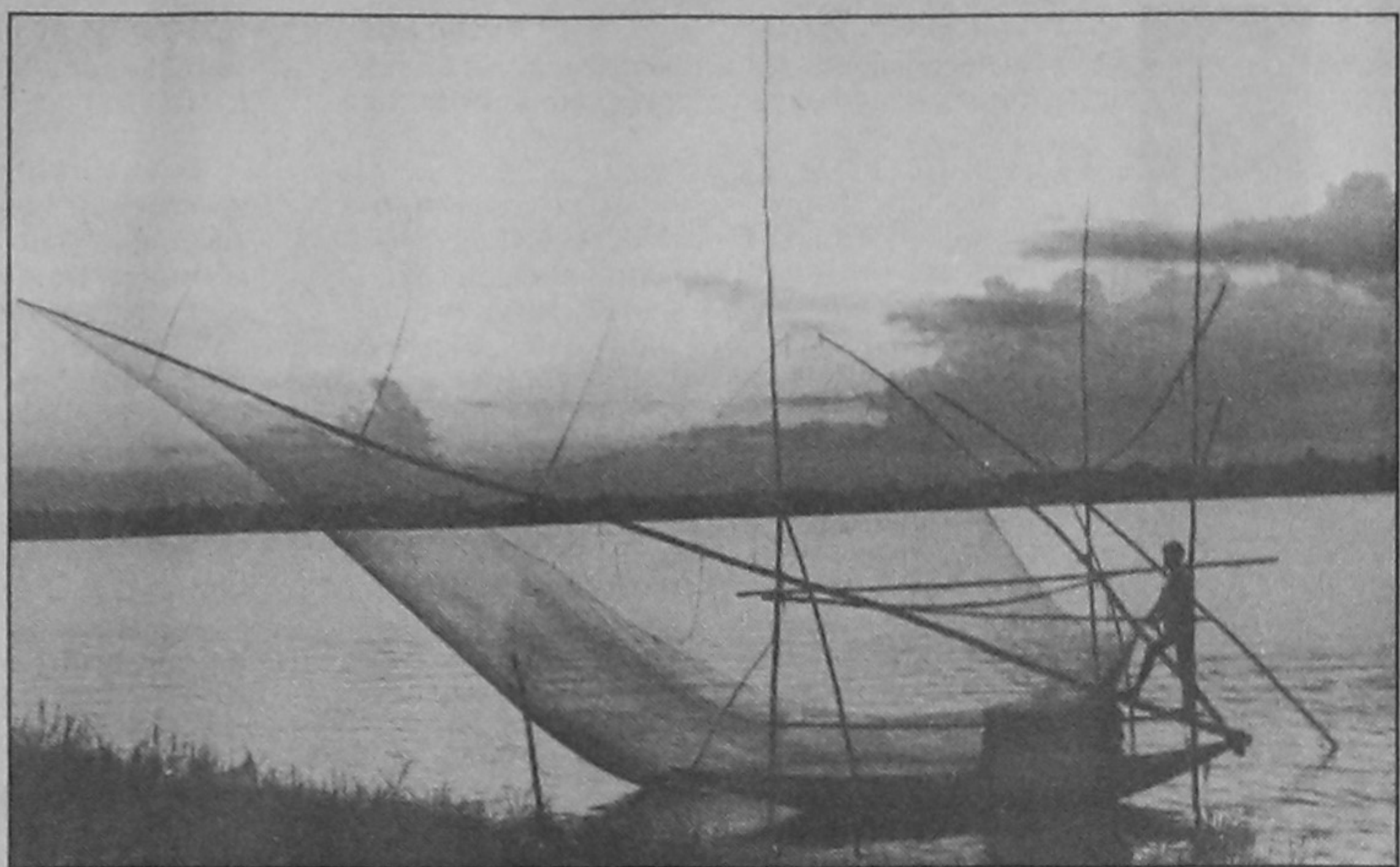
SI suspended, closed

THAKURGAON, Sept 15: One Sub-Inspector (SI) of police of Ranisankail Police Station was suspended temporarily and closed up in the police line on charge of illegally entering into the room of a woman, reports BSS.

On September 1 at dead of night SI Rabiul Islam Khan and one person named Paltu went to the house of Mozam of village Uttargaon, one and half kilometre off Ranisankail upazila headquarters in connection with a case. In absence of the owner of the house the police officer entered into the room of Mozam's wife Jyotuna Begum, 32. Apprehending ill-motive of the police officer Jyotuna Begum tactfully escaped from the room and locked up the door from outside. Next morning OC of Ranisankail Police Station Mohammad Hossain rescued SI Rabiul Islam Khan from the room. Later, Rabiul Islam Khan was suspended temporarily, closed up in the police line and a departmental case was started against him.



The afforestation programme is progressing in Tangail. Photo shows the deputy commissioner of Tangail recently planted a sapling in the Zila Council Auditorium premises.



A fisherman in Magura is engaged in fishing in the River Modhumati with a net locally called 'Veshal' in this autumn season. —Star photo

Pests invade sugarcane

SHARIATPUR, Sept 15: Pests have attacked sugarcane on vast tracts of land in the district, reports BSS.

The worst affected areas are Chhaygaon, Sajanpur, Mohishar, Ramvadrapur, Telipara Kanchanpara, Bhijari and Molarhat under Bhedarganj upazila Siddo Koneswar, Kehuranga under Damuda upazila, Burirhat, Machsahar, Devogue, Subachani under sadar upazila and Sureswar and Bhoyswar under Naria upazila.

Sugarcane growers are facing a serious setback due to extensive damage caused by the attack by the pests known as 'Mazra', a kind of brown grasshopper.

The sugarcane plants on about 500 acres in different areas of the district have been damaged, unofficial sources said.

Sugarcane plants have become yellow and the pest attack is gradually spreading to the adjoining fields.

Some sugarcane growers alleged that due to high price of spray machines and pesticide they could not take proper measure to check the pest attack.

An official of the local Agriculture Extension Department (AED) said necessary measures have been taken in this connection. They advised the sugarcane growers to cut down the affected plants.

Some sugarcane growers complained that the supervisors of AED were not available for providing

assistance.

Taking advantage of the situation some unscrupulous traders have increased the prices of pesticides. Some growers said pesticides several brands such as Ripcord, Nogos, Sumi Alfa, Sumithion and Dimecron are not available in the market. As a result the prices have gone up.

Many spray machines went out of order and spare parts are not available to repair these machines.

Another report from Chuadanga says: Darshana Sugar Mills management has fixed up a target to bring 14,500 acres of land under sugarcane cultivation in the mill zone area during the current cultivation season.

According to official source, 11,000 acres will be cultivated under the mills' direct supervision. The rest 3,500 acres will be brought under private cultivation.

The mills management will distribute seed, fertiliser and insecticides worth about Taka 5 crore among the sugarcane cultivators as loan.

Another report from Meherpur adds: AED has fixed a target to cultivate sugarcane on 5,000 acres in Meherpur in 2000-2001 season.

Taka 25 lakh loan among the sugarcane growers will be disbursed.

It is expected that 27,000 tons of sugarcane will be produced.

Hospitals are sick

Bagerhat Sadar Hospital and Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital are plague with multifarious problems, hampering smooth treatment of patients, reports UNB.

Patients of Bagerhat Sadar Hospital are suffering much due to shortage of physicians, instruments and medicine.

The hospital was upgraded to 100 beds from 50 beds in 1992. But no modern facilities have been provided to ensure better treatment facilities at the hospital.

The patients are mostly served with prescriptions only and they are compelled to buy necessary medicines from outside at exorbitant prices. Pregnant women have to face a lot of problems, as there is no labour ward for them.

The hospital is being run with inadequate number of doctors and other staff members. A post of senior eye consultant, a senior surgery consultant, an ENT specialist, three emergency medical officers, two nurses and an Office Assistant have been lying vacant since long.

The on duty doctors have to look after the Anaesthesia and Emergency Departments as no doc-

tors have been appointed in these two departments. The hospital also lacks adequate toilet and drinking water facilities. The only generator and two ambulances of the hospital are lying inoperative for the last 10 days. The local leaders have urged the authorities concerned to look into the matter and take necessary steps to ensure proper medical facilities at the hospital.

In Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital, medical services are being hampered for numerous problems, including lack of physicians, accommodation, toilets and medicine.

The 50-bed hospital, set up in 1984, is always cramped with 80 to 100 patients, as the number of its beds could not be raised in last 15 years.

The condition of its operation theatre is even worse as it has no modern equipment.

A visit to the hospital by the correspondent of the news agency showed that patients in general wards have to endure a lot of sufferings as there is no separate ward for cholera and diarrhoeal patients.

More worrying is that patients have to buy all necessary medicines from outside as the hospital can hardly provide them this service.

Hemp plants uprooted

KUSHITIA, Sept 15: Huge quantities of hemp plants were uprooted during an anti-drug drive in different villages of Philanagar union in Daulatpur upazila recently, reports UNB. BDR jawans and officials of Narcotics Control Department in a joint anti-drug drive uprooted 354 ganja plants in the upazila and deposited those with the local customs office. Four cases were filed with Daulatpur police station in this connection, officials said. Another report adds: A team of BDR has unearthed a clandestine phensedyl factory in the town and arrested five persons from the spot. The team with a magistrate raided a house at Kuthipara when the persons arrested were found bottling spurious

phensedyl. Large materials procured locally and from across the border were seized from the house. Those arrested are Shahjahan, Nasim, Mozamme, Babu Malitha and Mozam. When produced before the court, they were sent to jail. Another report from Bandarban says: Liquor worth about Tk 50,000 were seized by Army while being smuggled out to India recently. The Army men from Raisa Camp also seized 900 pieces of jafal.

The main ingredient of wine and 65 blank saline bags from a remote jungle in the area. But there was no arrest. The haul was handed over to local Narcotics Control office. Two cases were filed.



Jamuna has devoured the home of this family of three members recently at Makri in Shahjadpur upazila under Sirajganj district. Photo shows mother and her two sons are engaged in recovering their lost articles from the erosion site. —Star photo