

Gaibandha DIARY

Crisis of Boro seed

From Our Correspondent
GAIBANDHA, Dec 1: Acute scarcity of Boro seed is prevailing here in the current IRRI-Boro season.

The seed is being sold in black markets at Tk 20 to Tk 24 per kg against the BADC (Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation) fixed price of Tk 14 a kg. Farmers said a section influential people earlier collected seed from the BADC at fair price, depriving the genuine farmers. Moreover, the popular BR-28 is not available in the market, which will hamper in the Boro cultivation.

17 shops gutted

A devastating fire, which broke out in Old Judge Court area in the town, gutted 17 shops early Tuesday.

The fire originated from short circuit at a quilt shop immediately engulfed other shops. According to fire brigade office, which rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, the loss was estimated at Taka 20 lakh. But traders put the loss at Tk 50 lakh.

Eye camp

A weeklong eye camp was arranged here recently.

Organised by Gano Unnayan Kendra, a local NGO, the camp was set up at Nashratpur under Sadar upazila. A total of 114 patients, including 37 women, were operated upon. Dr Shahidul Islam Khan of Gausul Azam BNSC Eye Hospital, Dinapur conducted the operations. Earlier, spectacles and medicine were distributed among the patients free of cost.

Course on journalism

A four-day foundation training course on journalism concluded at Station Club here on Tuesday.

Sponsored by Bangladesh Centre for Development Journalism (BCDJ), the course was held under the auspices of Gaibandha Press Club. A total of 20 local journalists took part in the training course. Prof Dr Golam Rahman, a teacher of Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University, Dulal Chandra Biswas, a teacher of Mass Communication Department of Rajshahi University, and Sazzad Hossain, Deputy Director of BCDJ, were resource persons. A certificate distribution ceremony was also held on the concluding day. Presided over by Gobinda Lal Das, the ceremony was attended by Sirajuddin Ahmed, district and sessions judge, as chief guest.

Fake contractor arrested

A fake contractor was arrested at Matherhat under Sanderjanj upazila in the district recently.

The man was identified as Saidul Islam of Malibari union under Sadar upazila. Police said the man, who introduced himself as a contractor, cut down 37 roadside trees without obtaining legal document. According to local people, the man claimed that he received valid document from the district administration and employed labourers to cut down trees. Police also seized timber. Locals also said Sreepur union parishad Chairman Abdus Sattar and Bholu Mia, a timber trader, were also behind the plot. When some local people challenged Saidul he failed to produce document for cutting down the trees. When contacted, Chairman Abdus Sattar denied his involvement.

Prof Elias best principal of Sandwip

Professor Abul Kalam Elias, Principal of South Sandwip College, has been adjudged Best Principal of Sandwip upazila under Chittagong district, says a press release.

This was announced on the occasion of National Education Week, 2000. In Sandwip upazila, a function marking the week was held in East Sandwip High School premises recently.

Elias, who obtained postgraduate degree in early sixties from Dhaka University, also served as principal in Gurdahat College, Kishoreganj, Narasingdi Government College and Brahmanbaria University College.

He is also member of Bangladesh Asiatic Society, Bangla Academy, Folklore Society and Dhaka University Philosophy Association.

Phensidyl recovered

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 1: Some 400 bottles of contraband phensidyl syrup were recovered from a private car at Dourika Ferry Ghat under Babuganj upazila here on Sunday night.

Police also arrested Rokonzaman, the car driver. A case was filed in this connection.

Massive post-flood rehabilitation programme in Chapainawabganj

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Dec 1: In a bid to recoup the crop losses and assuage the sufferings of flood-affected people, the government has taken up a massive post-flood rehabilitation programme in five upazilas, involving Tk 96 lakh, reports UNB.

According to official statistics, standing crops on over 10,000 hectares of land were damaged in flashfloods in September last.

Officials said the government has sanctioned Tk 56 lakh for only agricultural rehabilitation.

Under the programme, Agriculture Extension Department along with district administration is distributing seeds of Boro paddy, mustard, wheat, maize, lentil and other winter vegetables among 19,650 flood-hit families in the five upazilas free of cost.

Apart from the agriculture rehabilitation programme, the government sanctioned Tk 40 lakh under house-building programme to rebuild 13,848 houses damaged during the deluge.

The money sanctioned under the house building programme will be distributed among 1100 families in Sadar upazila, 900 in Shibganj, 200 in Nachole, 300 in Bholahat upazilas, 500 in Nawabganj Municipality, 100 in Shibganj, and 200 in Rohonpur Municipality.

The government also distributed 83,714 VGF cards in the flood-affected areas. Each cardholder is receiving 10 kgs of rice per month for four months beginning from the Bengali month of Ashwin.

Besides, 2,959 VGF cards were distributed among erosion-hit people.

Sabas Bangladesh, a unique Liberation War sculpture

By RU Correspondent



Sabas Bangladesh, a liberation war sculpture on Rajshahi University campus.

long as the monument remains.

Sabas Bangladesh has three mentionable stages. The first is 40 feet by 40 feet square premises which is 4 feet high. The second portion is a six feet high alter on which figures of two freedom fighters carrying two rifles in their hands, the main attraction of the monument. Behind the two figures, there is a replica of Bangladesh flag, which is 36 feet in height, making the two figures more attractive. The flag is white, in stead of green Bangladesh National flag, because of its artistic composition. The red circle of Bangladesh flag is symbolised with a hollow imposition of the two figures, one is lungi clad and the other is attired with a pant on both of them are the symbol freedom fighters. The former is an illiterate one and patriot freedom fighter representing a villager and the later represents an urban citizen.

Moreover, on the front walls of the alter, there are two white panels on which the artist has portrayed common masses of Bangladesh including students, youths, bauls, women who were united against the ill-forces of our Liberation War in 1971.

At the end of the two figures, a brass plate is attached with which reads verses of the ever green poet Sukanta Bhattacharya starting with "Sabas Bangladesh ..." that ignites Bengali nationalism.

Artist Niton Kundu has initiated a new dimension in its construction using red oxides with cement in addition to concrete. It was the first of its kind in Bangladesh.

Niton Kundu's work has not only depicted the history of our war of independence in 1971, but also the present and future of the country as well as our heroic united struggle against autocracy, brutality and human right abuses before 1971. He himself expressed after the inauguration of Sabas Bangladesh, "I have tried to attract the attention of all towards the future alongside the glorious past and present of the nation."

A large number of visitors come on the campus everyday from different parts of the country to enjoy the beauty of the monument. Since its inauguration, the stage on its footstep becomes the centre of different cultural activities on the campus. It hosted a number of cultural programmes including 125th national Rabindra Sangeet conference in 1998.

Days will come and go, but the monument will last immobile with many memories and evidences as long as our national spirit will transmit from generation to generation. Long live Sabas Bangladesh!

NGO staff cheats 16 women

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Dec 1: A field worker of Proshika Manabik Unnayan Kendra, Taligati branch under Atpara upazila in the district allegedly cheated 16 women, all members of a co-operative society sponsored by the NGO.

Co-operative society members said 16 women of "Jovantika Proshika Mohila Society" of village Gupulpur in Atpara upazila received Tk 64 thousand as loan from Taligati branch on November 16. The branch issued the cheque in favour of Promila Devi, treasurer of the co-operative society.

After receiving the cheque, Promila Devi went to Sonali Bank, Atpara branch with Mujibur Rahman, the field worker, and drew the money. After that, as Mujibur told Promila that he would go to Gupulpur and distribute the money among the 16 women of the society, the treasurer handed over the money to him in good faith. But Mujibur did not disburse the money. And he went into hiding.

A case was filed in this connection.

Workshop

A daylong workshop on "Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development" was held on Tuesday in Barisal, says a press release issued by Integrated Action Research and Development, an NGO.

Objective of the workshop was to incorporate indigenous knowledge in development initiatives, research and education curriculum. Jointly organised by Bangladesh Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK) and Integrated Community Development Association (ICDA), Barisal, the workshop was presided over by Anowar Zahid, Director of ICDA.

Sukanta Sen, BARCIK representative, presented keynote paper. About 45 participants from different organisations, which include district Livestock Office, Forestry Office, Biology and Soil Science Departments of Barisal BM College, took part in the workshop.

The workshop focussed on the adverse impact on cropland and environment as well following indiscriminate use of fertiliser and pesticides and cultivation of genetically modified crops. It also discourages the use of ground water for irrigation.

Katyani Puja Fair ends ahead of schedule

Extortion takes toll on business

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Dec 1: The traditional fair, which is held here every year on the occasion of Katyani Puja, ended ahead of schedule this year because of extortion.

The fair lasts for one month, but this time traders have been compelled to end it only after five days as extortion takes heavy toll on their business.

Traders said extortionists and hoodlums in Nutan Bazaar area in the town, where the fair was organised, collected toll both from the sellers and buyers.

Traders came to the fair from different parts of the country. Lakhs of people from home and neighbouring India visit the fair. Local people have expressed apprehension that this year's untoward incident will dampen the spirit of the fair.

Durga Puja is the main religious festival of the Hindu community in the country. But Magura district is an exception. Katyani Puja has become the greatest festival for Hindu community here.

Shatish Chandra, a rich man of village Parnadual under Sadar upazila, first introduced the Katyani Puja about 50 years back. From then, the Puja is being celebrated here every year with great enthusiasm. The idols of this Puja resemble the images of Durga Puja. But Katyani Puja is celebrated in Kartik months of Bengali calendar year.

According to a DAE source, in Kurigram, a total of 68,500 hectares will be brought under intensive Boro cultivation programme in all nine upazilas of the district to produce 2,02,100 tons of Boro rice during this winter season. Of this, 66,000 hectares will be brought under Hybrid Variety of Boro farming to produce 1,98,000 tons of rice and Local Variety of Boro will be cultivated on 2,500 hectares to produce more 4,100 tons of rice.

Three hundred hectares will be brought under maize cultivation to produce 1,200 tons of maize. 1,800 hectares under potato farming to produce 2,160 tons, 8,000 hectares mustard cultivation to produce 7,200 tons of mustard seeds.

Groundnut will be cultivated on 1,000 hectares to produce 1,900 tons of groundnut.

Pulse will be on 230 hectares. Onion will be cultivated on 300 hectares to produce 3,000 tons of onion, garlic on 300 hectares to produce 1,725 tons, pepper on 2,000 hectares to produce 5,000 tons, tamarind on 500 hectares to produce 1,250 tons, ginger on 300 hectares to produce 1,500 tons and dhania on 80 hectares to produce 170 tons.

Deputy Director of DAE, Kurigram, Abdur Rauf told recently that necessary steps had already been taken to make winter crop cultivation programme a success. "Seeds, inputs and technologies are being provided to the farmers by all concerned departments in this connection. Though a section of vested persons were trying to create artificial seed crisis, we have tackled the situation already," he added.

40 posts of dentist vacant in Khulna

KHULNA, Dec 1: Some 40 posts of dentist out of 60 remained vacant in Khulna division for long, making Health for All a meaningless slogan, reports UNB.

Taking advantage of the situation, quacks have set up dental care centres in almost all markets of the districts and upazila headquarters and they are cashing in on the ignorance of rural people.

According to sources at the Divisional Civil Surgeon Office, 40 posts of dental surgeon against 60 sanctioned posts remained vacant in 11 government hospitals and 49 upazila health complexes in 10 districts of the division for long.

In Khulna, five posts of dental

surgeon, out of nine, remained vacant while in Bagerhat all the eight posts and in Sakthira five out of six posts are lying vacant.

In Jessore, five out of seven, in Jhenidah all the five posts, all the three posts in Magura and Chuadanga districts each, one out of two in Narail, three out of five in Kushtia and one in Meherpur are also lying vacant.

A dental surgeon said as many as 75 per cent people of the country live with their dental problems due to shortage of dental surgeons.

When contacted Khulna Divisional Health Director Dr M Lutfur Rahman said the process is underway to fill up the vacant posts soon.

Acute crisis of onion seed in Netrakona

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Dec 1: Acute shortage of onion seed has been prevailing in the district, hampering the farming.

Farmers alleged that price of onion seed in bazaars of Sadar, Kaimakand, Atpara, Madan, Barhatta, Kendua, Purbadhala, Durgapur, Mohanganj and Khalajuri has soared this year. The seed is now selling at Tk 380 a kg in local markets as against Tk 270 in the last year, farmers said.

Agriculture officials said over 1000 hectares of land in the district will be brought under onion cultivation in the current season with an estimated output target of 10,000 tons.

Local people said the crisis may seriously hamper the onion cultivation.

Farmers said frequent bad weather damaged onion last year, causing this year's crisis.

Farmers have urged the

authorities concerned to take immediate steps to distribute quality seeds among growers.

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 1: Trial of sensational Roksana Akhter murder case began on Tuesday in districts and sessions judge court here after some nine months of the killing of the housewife.

Charge of the case was farmed under Section 302 accusing husband Sheikh Masudul Islam alias Khokon, who was produced before the court on the day.

Roksana was killed in her house in the town on February 10.

News snaps

11 hurt in an attack by miscreants

NOAKHALI, Dec 1: At least 11 people were injured, two of them critically, in an attack by armed miscreants at Khulpara Madda Bazaar in Chakhill upazila on Saturday, reports UNB.

The critically injured Ramjan Hossain, 20, 3rd year student of Chakhill Government Mahabub College, and Morshed Alam Mithu, 17, student of Dattapara Degree College, were members of the attackers. The injured businessmen Rafiq, Motin, Rahman and Jamiruddin of the bazaar and 97 passers-by Namia Begum, 32, and her son Sumon, 12, were admitted at the hospital. Police and witnesses said some 15-16 terrorists equipped with arms created panic by exploding bomb and firing shots at the bazaar and damaged valuables worth over Tk one lakh. They went on rampage failing to search out their rival Chhatra Dal activists, they added. The miscreants also ransacked the local BNP office and a dispensary. A case was filed against 13 terrorists.

Woman strangled

HOBIGANJ, Dec 1: A woman was allegedly strangled to death for dowry money at Aushpara village in Sadar upazila here on Saturday, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as local Sunrise Kindergarten teacher Delowara Begum, 26, wife of primary school teacher Abdul Quaiyum of the village. Police and family sources said Quaiyum demanded dowry money even after six years of their marriage, although the victim's brothers paid him money several times. While she returned home from the kindergarten, an altercation with her husband and family members ensued over dowry money. At one stage she was strangled to death. The body was sent to Sadar hospital for autopsy and a case was filed.

Foodgrains for development

MANIKGANJ, Dec 1: Some 632 mts foodgrains have been allocated to implement 413 uplift schemes in the current fiscal year under Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Programme, reports UNB.

Of the total grains, 77 mts were allotted in Gheor, 85 mts in Doulatpur, 99 mts in Hariampur, 82 mts in Shibbalaya, 77 mts in Shaturia, 109 mts in Shingair, 97 mts in Sadar upazila and 94 mts in local municipality. The foodgrains will be spent for the maintenance of rural roads and bridges.

Masked tribal youths demand toll

RANGAMATI, Dec 1: A gang of masked tribal youths Thursday served written notices of Jhumia families at Bhubanchhara in Jurachhari upazila demanding toll, reports UNB.

According to the villagers, the youths numbering about 15 came to their doorsteps in the morning and handed over the notices demanding Tk 500 per family. They also threatened to kidnap the villagers if they fail to pay the money within two weeks, creating panic in the area. Locals said most Jhumia families in the area are very poor and they are passing through a bad time for lack of job. When contacted police said they were keeping sharp eyes on the village.



Students of different government and non-government primary schools brought out a colourful procession recently in front of Ullapara Upazila Nirbahi Office at Ullapara under Sirajganj district on the occasion of National Primary Education Week.

—Star photo

Man killed in road mishap

BARGUNA, Dec 1: An unidentified old man was killed in a launch mishap here on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the old man was critically injured when a launch hit another Barguna-bound launch in which he was travelling later on he died in a local hospital.

Truck driver killed in road accident

COMILLA, Dec 1: A truck driver was killed and a helper injured when two trucks collided at Roypur in Daudkandi upazila on Dhaka-Chittagong highway on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Police said the mishap occurred when a Chittagong-bound truck hit another Dhaka-bound one in the morning, killing the driver of the Dhaka-bound truck on the spot. Identity of the deceased could not be known. The injured, identified as helper Shahabuddin, 23, was first admitted to Gouripur Health Complex and then shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. A case was filed.

Safe drinking water supply project

PIROJPUR, Dec 1: Public Health Engineering Directorate (PHED) started a pure drinking water supply project in collaboration with DANIDA, reports BSS.

This project is being implemented under DANIDA-PHED programme under coastal water supply and sanitation scheme. This project will cover in 4 upazilas. The upazilas are Pirojpur Sadar, Bhandaria, Kawkhali, Nesarabad. Each upazila will have 50 deep tube wells. Each deep tube well will cost Taka 45,200.

134 crimes committed in October

KURIGRAM, Dec 1: A total of 134 crimes were committed, 100 cases were filed and 56 persons were arrested in these connections in all nine upazilas of Kurigram during the month of October, official sources said, reports BSS.

The statistics was disclosed at the monthly Law and Order Situation meeting held in the conference hall of Kurigram Collectorate, which was chaired by Deputy Commissioner of Kurigram A F M Solaiman Chowdhury. The meeting revealed that two incidents of killing, three thefts, three cow-lifting, three incidents of kidnapping women, six rape incidents, 10 incidents of torture and abuse of women, five drug related crimes, five smuggling and other crimes were committed in this period. Officials of District and Police Administrations were present at the meeting.

Newly-wed woman commits suicide

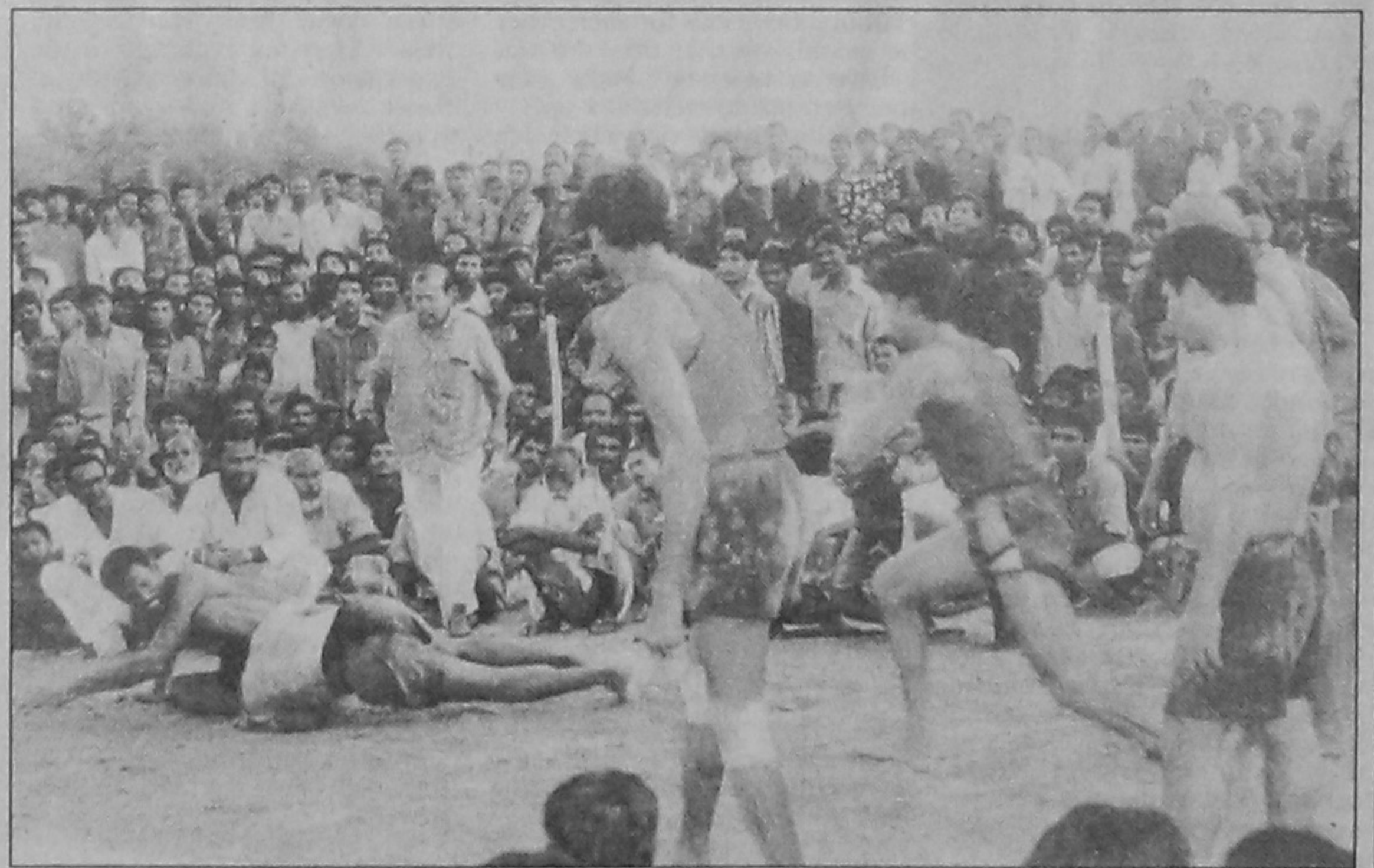
HABIGANJ, Dec 1: A newly-wed woman allegedly committed suicide by jumping onto a speeding bus at Bashina village in Bahubal upazila on Dhaka-Sylhet highway on Tuesday, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Nilufa Akhter, 18, wife of Harunur Rashid of North Joypur village in Madhapur upazila. Police said Nilufa went to Bashina village along with Selim Hossain of Kalkrishna Nagar village earlier on the day. The reason behind her suicide could not be known. Police arrested Selim in this connection. Nilufa's family believes that it was a murder. A UD case was filed. Angry villagers barricaded the Dhaka-Sylhet highway for about an hour protesting the incident.

WDB contractors' threat

BARGUNA, Dec 1: Local contractors of Water Development Board are facing troubles in encasing their bills as there is no regional accounts centre (RAC) here, reports UNB.

The WDB contractors at a news conference at the local press club on Wednesday said they have to go to Patuakhali RAC office to encash their bills. They also alleged that officials of Patuakhali RAC office make delay in paying their bills unless their hands are greased. In the face of pressure from the contractors to set up a RAC office here, the concerned ministry once formed a committee to look into the matter. But the report of the committee remained shelved for reasons unknown. The contractors threatened to wage a tough movement if their demand is not met by December this year.



Kabadi players in action as spectators watch the game at a village in Magura district last week. As the winter sets in, youths start organising matches. Kabadi is a very popular game in rural Bangladesh.

—Star photo