

# Chuadanga people face arsenic threat

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Jan 17: The people of all the four upazilas are facing the severe threat of arsenic contamination in ground water.

According to Chuadanga District Public Health Engineering Department sources, at the first phase water of 1,417 hand pump tubewells of all the four upazilas have been tested in the month of August last and of which contamination of arsenic beyond permissible level were detected in 250 tubewells.

The four upazilas are Chuadanga Sadar, Alamdanga, Damurhuda and Jibannagar.

In Chuadanga sadar upazila the water of 400 hand pump tubewells were tested, of which contamination of arsenic beyond permissible level have been detected in 51 hand pump tubewells. In Alamdanga upazila water of 390 hand pump tubewells have been tested, of which contamination of arsenic have been detected in 72 tubewells. In Damurhuda upazila the water of 502 hand pump tubewells have been tested and of which contamination of arsenic have been detected in 115 hand pump tubewells. In Jibannagar upazila

water of 125 hand pump tubewells have been tested and of which contamination of arsenic has been detected in 12 hand pump tubewells.

The total number of hand pump tubewells in Chuadanga district are 19,378 and of which there are 4,400 hand pump tubewells in Chuadanga sadar upazila, 6,575 tubewells in Alamdanga upazila, 5,373 tubewells in Damurhuda upazila and 3,030 tubewells in Jibannagar upazila.

Of the total hand pump tubewells, 7,969 tubewells are government and 11,409 tubewells are non-government and private.

During the last three years 16 persons have died in three upazilas of Chuadanga district by drinking arsenic contaminated water. Two persons have died in Chuadanga Sadar upazila, seven persons in Alamdanga upazila and seven persons more died in Damurhuda upazila.

The Public Health Engineering Department has sealed off all the 250 arsenic contaminated hand pump tubewells.

It is learnt that the stock position of medicine by which the water of

hand pump tubewells are tested for detecting arsenic in water are too insufficient in Chuadanga district.

It is further learnt that only water of 200 hand pump tubewells can be examined with present stock. As a result water of all the hand pump tubewells of the district could not be tested for detecting arsenic.

Impact foundation, non-governmental organisation (NGO), started resinking work of arsenic contaminated hand pump tubewells in Chuadanga district in August last, but could not succeed because they said that through resinking of hand pump tubewells it is not possible to make a hand pump tubewell arsenic free. Only remedy is to install new ones. The arsenic contaminated hand pump tubewells are needed to be sealed forever.

To save the people of Chuadanga from arsenic steps are needed because water of 60 per cent tubewells in all the four upazilas of the district are arsenic contaminated.

## Dilly-dallying attitude of Jessore Education Board

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 17: Registration process of some one thousand examinees of SSC examinations to be held under newly launched Barisal Education Board (BEB) this year is being hampered.

The students earlier got them registered with Jessore Education Board. Schools of the students were under the jurisdiction of Jessore until the Barisal Board was set up. But now Jessore Board is making delay in sending the records to Barisal Board.

It is alleged that a section of officials and employees of Jessore Board are reluctant to send the papers in time. Some officials of BEB said Jessore Board's dilly-dallying attitude is making the registration process more complicated.

About 60,000 examinees from BEB will be appearing in the examinations of 2001.

## Tk 55,000 snatched in Bandarban

From A Correspondent

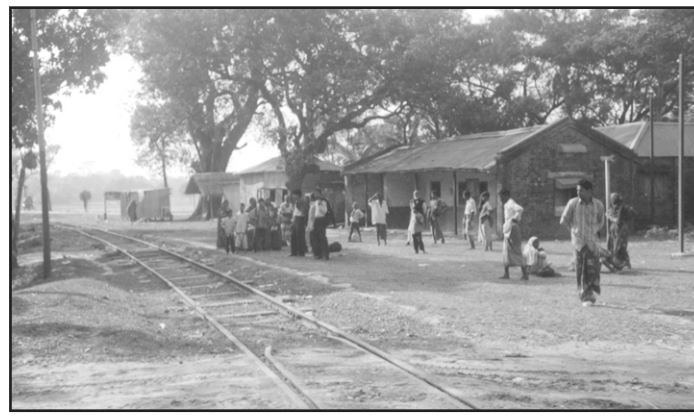
BANDARBAN, Jan 17: A group of masked men numbering 14-15 snatched Tk 55,000 from an employee of Jamiluddin Group of Industries in Tarabunia area on Lama-Alikadam road in the district on Sunday.

The masked men intercepted a motor vehicle in which salesman of the company Palash Kanti Das was travelling. The gangsters also stabbed driver Monirul Alam before decamping with the money.

## Embezzlement of fund in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 17: Three separate cases have been filed against former chairman and four staff members of Sadar municipality for embezzling fund and misuse of power, reports agency.

The accused are former municipal chairman Alhaj Mohammad Abu Taher Mia, former sub-assistant engineer Abdul Mannan, employees Mohammad Mokhesur Rahman and AB Siddiqui and acting Bazar Supervisor Tajammul Hossain. According to cases filed by local Bureau of Anti-corruption recently Taher Mia in collusion with Mokhesur and Tajammul Hossain misappropriated Tk 28,790 submitting separate false vouchers in 1994 and 1993 respectively. The vouchers were prepared on the construction of a wooden bridge over the River Narasunda at Char Sholakia in 1994 and selling of four trees through leasing process in 1993. Mokhesur and Engineer Abdul Mannan drew Tk 43,473 preparing false papers.



Passengers have to suffer a lot due to absence of a waiting shed at Tograihat Railway Station in Kurigram district. --Starphoto

## Waiting shed in rly station needed

From A Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Jan 17: In absence of a waiting shed at Tograihat Railway Station, the passengers have been facing much inconvenience.

A large number of people come to this railway station everyday, but in absence of a waiting shed they roam about aimlessly at the station for hours together.

During the rainy season and summer the scorching heat of the sun multiplies their misery. The verandah of the station is the only place where people can take shelter.

But the small verandah itself remains packed with the goods which are brought for sending to other places of the country.

There is no parcel room at the station. The lone waiting room meant for the passengers are being used for parcel room since long. People of Tograihat have urged the higher authority of Railway Department to take immediate steps for solving the problems.

## 2 lakh children deprived of primary education

MANIKGANJ, Jan 17: An estimated 2 lakh children are deprived of primary education in the district due to negligence of teachers, failure to supply text books and corruption by a section of education officials, reports UNB.

While visiting a number of primary schools the agency correspondent found a dismal picture and both teachers and guardians alleged of widespread corruption and irregularities in Food for Education Programme.

Non-availability of textbooks and lack of seriousness among a section of the teachers, children are getting more and more prone to TV and undesirable activities, said the guardians.

They felt that the government programme of education for all by 2005 is unlikely to achieve success if the situation continues.

The education officials said 1,82,383 children are enrolled in 1,897 primary schools in the district. Of the schools, 457 are government, 126 registered, 6 unregistered, 27 community and 22 satellite.

In most schools the number of enrolled students is inflated. Some teachers on condition of anonymity admitted that many of the students enrolled in the register are either irregular or never attend the school. Food grains are given to the students to encourage poor families send their wards to school.

## Seed shortage may hit onion farming

NARSINGDI, Jan 17: Onion cultivation in the district during the current season may face a setback due to acute seed shortage, reports UNB.

Department of Agriculture Extension has taken up a scheme to cultivate onion on 1,500 hectares of land in six upazilas of the district.

Farmers said they need 10,000-kg seed to fulfil the production target, but BADC supplied only one-third seed of the total requirement. Farmers said, "BADC seed

dealers, taking the advantage, are selling seeds at an exorbitant price, throwing us in great uncertainty.

Now, one kg local variety onion seed is being sold between Tk 700 and Tk 800 against the BADC rate of Tk 600 while the Indian seed between Tk 500 and Tk 600.

The farmers apprehend that production target will not be achieved if the situation continues.

## Tk 10cr Sirajganj protection embankment completed

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 17: The river embankment protection work along Shimla-Bhatpiary area costing Taka 87 lakh has been completed recently.

The Water Development Board (WDB) officials said that each and every year a vast tract of land, villages and homesteads are devoured by the mighty River Jamuna. At least 20 villages have already been devoured by the river. With a view to resisting further erosion by the river, the government erected two spurs at Shimla and Parpachil area at a cost of Taka 10 crore in this fiscal. As a result a vast tract of land including villages and road cum embankment are being protected from the onslaught of the river Jamuna.

WDB used sand bags, bricks, crates and other materials to save the embankment at Bhatpiary and Shimla area. Most people in the area have opined that construction of solid spurs would help save their localities permanently.

During this fiscal though the temporary protection work has been completed, yet the contractors did not receive their bills, the concerned contractors complained to this correspondent.

However, the local people opined that if the WDB authorities construct a pucca road cum embankment like that of Belkuchi-Enayetpur Road,



The Water Development Board (WDB) authorities have constructed a pucca flood protection embankment along Shimla area in Sirajganj. The local people have been planting saplings of various fruit bearing trees and flowers along the embankment area. --Starphoto

the communication will be much more easier and smoother.

On the other hand the local people have also demanded of the authorities concerned to build two pucca spurs near the mazar sharif of Hazrat Khaza Shah Sufi Yunus Ali Enayetpuri (R) along Betil-Enayetpur area with a view to pro-

tecting the important handloom industrial area from extinction.

The WDB officials mentioned that the extension work of the emergency protection is being done. All procedures have been completed, they said.

# British empire rocked by Chougacha indigo revolt

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, Jan 17: The people of Chougacha played a leading role in the historic indigo revolt against the European planters to shut down their factories in Bengal during the 19th century.

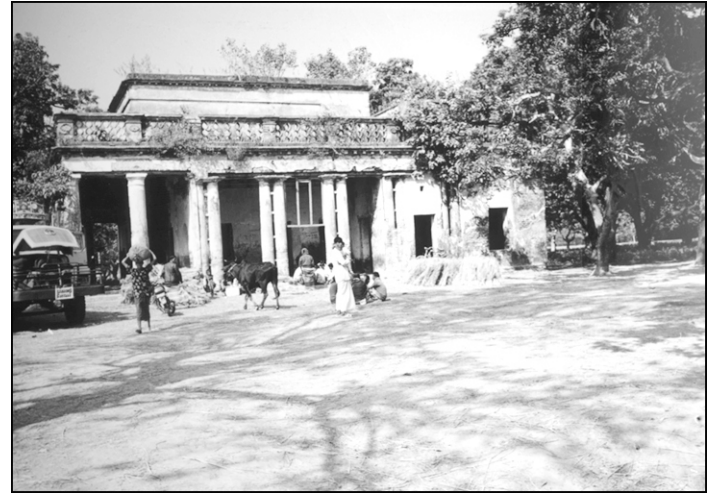
It struck violently the planters, creating gravest situation for them to survive.

It rocked the British rule in India challenging their strength and existence also.

The indigo revolt was originated from Chougacha and spread to other areas of indigo cultivation under the Jessore-Nadia districts turning the stray armed clashes between the locals and 'colonialists' into bloody battles.

Two proud sons of Chougacha initiated, planned, organised and conducted the revolt. They were Digambar Biswas and Bishnu Charan Biswas.

Both of them were highly spoken of for their excellent moral charac-



Front view of the indigo factory at Khalishpur in Jessore which is now abandoned and in dilapidated condition.

Digombor Biswas was posted at Chougacha factory, while Bishnu Charan Biswas at Khalishpur in the district. But they could not stay long in their service.

In human behaviour, physical torture, oppression and labour exploitation of the poor indigo cultivators by the planters aroused their sentiment. They rose in protest against this trade policy of the planters and tried to mend the policy, but in vain. Having failed, they resigned the job and determined to teach them a good lesson.

When the poor cultivators were groaning under the brunt of oppression and torture of the planters and were looking on for a way out, Digombor and Bishnu emerged as their guardian. He took the leadership to mobilise in support of their plans.

The local people organised the cultivators under Chougacha, Kadgora, Khalishpur, Narayanpur, Boro Khanpur, Elishgari and Bagadanga factories all near Chougacha in hence to rise on revolt against the colonialists.

Secret killings, plunders, burning of houses and raping of women of unruly indigo cultivators became the character of the planters.

One English writer describing the pitiable condition of the poor indigo cultivators of Bengal under the ruthless repression of planters said that only cultivators who was found unruly to obey order of the planters were used to be kidnapped and confined in dark holes, beaten

up and put to starve pending their submission.

This practice of the planters was widespread and condemned but none dared to oppose face to face.

Digombor Biswas and Bishnu Charan came out in the open. They moved from village to village under cover of darkness and began to collect manpower and train them to build up strong force against the planters.

According to 'Banglar Bidso' by Husen Uddin Hossen, both these Biswas, recruited good number of armed civil force from Barisal to fight out the planters.

The revolt started in mid-sixties of the 19th century. Their first attack was directed against the Kadgora factory. A fierce fight took place here. The rebels went on rampage and damaged the factory, plundered all the valuables and burnt it down. They also killed all the employees and guards of the factory.

Chougacha was their next target. They did the same here. Thus they destroyed the Khalishpur, Narayanpur, Elishgari and Bagadanga factories one by one and the planters, who miserably failed to resist the onrush of revolt migrated to safer place.

It will not be out of place to mention here that in all these attacks the entire operation was led by the joint command of Digombor Biswas and Bishnu Charan Biswas.

During the peak period of the revolt, planters got united under the

support of the British administration. They formed the Bengal Planters' Association and went on counter attacks.

So long the Shautal community who were engaged in the planters' factories as slaves, deserted them and joined the rebels in protest against the planters for killing their community leader Kanu by them.

This strengthened force of the rebels who regained more courage and spirit and became serious in their mission.

The Shautal community were imported by the planters from the Shautal Pargana to work in their factories as slaves. They were physically well-built, strong and stout. They were very dauntless and fearless.

There are a good number of Shautals known as 'Sardars' who are living at Chougacha, Kadgora, Khalishpur, Sharumpur and Kotchandpur in the district still.

The forefathers of these people were imported by the European planters from their original home in Shautal Pargana in early 19th century.

Noted playwright Dinobondhu Mitra took up his mighty pen against the planters and enacted drama 'Nil Darpan' to champion the cause of the rebels. Very soon, the drama won support of all ranks and file in the country.

Michael Modhusudan Dutta, epic poet of Jessore, translated the 'Nil Darpan' in English and with the help of reverend James Long drew attention of the British Parliament, who decided to address the problems of the indigo cultivators in Bengal.

Renowned journalist and novelist Hamandra Prasad Ghose of Chougacha, author of the history of Jessore-Khulna Satish Chandra Mitra, noted journalist Sishir Kumar Ghose, expressed solidarity with the rebels.

The sacrifice of one Ginish Chandra Bose is also worth mentioning. He's rewarding service in the Police Department as Police Inspector was lost due to his regular contribution to an English Daily in Calcutta supporting the cause of the rebels of the indigo revolt in Bengal.

Hosen Uddin Hosen in his 'Banglar Bidraho' said that within a short while the indigo revolt won support of all intellectuals of the country and openly opposed the planters.

But strangely none was found in the field to handle the revolt, except the two brave sons of Chougacha.

When the fighting was going on a new manager James Farlong joined the indigo company to assist the manager, Larmore. This added more fuel to the revolt and shortly the whole scenario went beyond control of all concerned.

According to District Gazetteers, Jessore, a village under Chougacha union of Jhinkergacha police station in Jessore, Chougacha was known as an important market which was held twice a week. It appears as a prominent place in Renell's map.

A road to Chougacha was constructed in 1800 and this was the

of both the planters and administration, constructed a bridge across the River Kapadak at Chougacha in 1850.

But within three years of construction, it was washed away in the torrential current of the mighty river Kapadak.

One hundred forty years after collapse of the bridge, a bailey bridge was constructed over Kapadak of Chougacha in 1990. Interference by the then communication secretary, Hossain Toufik Imam and Goc Jessore Cantonment Maj Gen Haroon Ahmed Choudhury, made it possible for the bridge to be constructed in response to the call of the local upazila parishad.



The Kadgara High School building has been established on the foundation of destroyed Kadgara indigo factory in Jessore --Starphoto

main communication to and from Jessore.

It is situated on the bank of the River Kapadak in 23°-16' N-latitude and 89°-41' E-longitude 16 miles north east of Jessore.

Being alleged by the geographical position of the place, Bucksworth an eminent European planter built a number of factories here.

According to Indigo Commission Report the indigo manufactured in this side of India, is of prime quality and that of lower Bengal, specially which is produced in the district Jessore and Nadia and probably is the finest in the world world."

During the East India Company's rule, Chougacha, was dubbed as a place of 'notorious disturbers'.

Apprehending massive danger from these groups, the then Magistrate Beaufort, as a measure of precaution to safeguard the interest

Again in a bid to suppress the notorious disturbers of Chougacha and bring them to book, the then British administration set up a police station at Chougacha in 1863.

It was wound up on June 30, 1925 and the last Officer-in-Charge (OC) Chougacha PS was Syed Makbul Hossain. It is learnt, with the drastic fall in crimes, the existence of the PS, lost its importance and so decision was taken to abolish it and merge with the Jhinkergacha Police Station (PS).

After the liberation war of 1971, the need of a police station was considered from the point of view of development apart from law and order situation.

So, a police station at Chougacha was established again on June 23, 1977 and the then Deputy Commissioner of Jessore, Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, got it set up under his personal initiative.

## News snaps

### Tk 4.31 looted from bank

CHANDPUR, Jan 17: Robbers broke into Janata Bank's Matlab upazila branch and looted Tk 4.31 lakh Sunday night, reports UNB.

Manager of the branch Mokhesur Rahman said, "Although the incident took place at midnight, I was informed about it at 8 am. The bank is situated some 300 yards away of Matlab police station. A case was filed.

### Female FFs' council formed

BARISAL, Jan 17: Mohila Muktijoddha Command Council (female freedom fighters' command council) of Barisal district was formed here at a function at Barisal district unit of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad Office on Saturday, reports BSS.

Commander of Barisal district unit of Muktijoddha Sangsad (freedom fighters' council) Sheikh Kutubuddin Ahmed presided over the function. A 51-member Mohila Muktijoddha Command Council with Fazlun Nesa Farid as Coordinator, Mamtaj Bashir and Shyamoli Saha as Joint Coordinator, and Kohinoor Begum as Member-secretary was formed.

### Transformer recovered

NAOAGON, Jan 17: Police recovered a stolen transformer of Polli Bidyt Samity last week and arrested a man in this connection, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, police raided Bakapur Sannatoli area of Chowbaria Hat in Manda upazila and recovered the transformer while it was taking away by a truck. Police nabbed Bimol Kumar alias Mogla from the spot but his accomplices managed to flee the scene. A case was filed.

### Housewife suffers acid injuries

SATKHIRA, Jan 17: A young housewife in Kaliganj upazila in the district suffered critical acid burn injuries on Saturday night, reports UNB.

Police said a gang of miscreants threw acid on Parvin, 24, wife of Sadek Ali of village Bandhakari, while she was sleeping in her house. She was rushed to the Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition. The reason behind the acid attack could not be known immediately. Police arrested two villagers Golam Mostafa and Shamsur Rahman in this connection. A case was filed with the police. According to a non-government organisation, some 272 incidents of acid throwing occurred across the country in the last year.

### FFs' grand rally

PIROJPUR, Jan 17: A grand rally of freedom fighters and their children was held in the town Tuesday morning, reports UNB.

Chairman of Muktijoddha Central Command Council Principal Ahad Chowdhury was present in the meeting organised by local Muktijoddha Command.

A large number of war veterans including female freedom fighters attended the meeting chaired by district unit president Shafuluddin Ahmed. Speaking on the occasion Principal Ahad Chowdhury called for greater unity of the freedom fighters.

### Workshop for journalists

KHULNA, Jan 17: Twenty-five journalists from different districts of the division are taking part in a workshop on gender issues which began on Sunday at the city's officers club auditorium, reports BSS.

The five-day workshop has been arranged by Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) under Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality Programme of Women and Children Affairs Ministry. Divisional Commissioner MA Taher inaugurated the workshop as chief guest.

### Old man killed in clash

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 17: An old man was killed and five people were injured in a clash over a minor dispute at Shambari village in Kashba upazila Sunday, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Chand Mia Bhuiyan alias Chunnu Bhuiyan, 65. The clash between two groups of villagers took place over Tk 40. A case was filed.

### Prices of warm clothes up

MADARIPUR, Jan 17: Prices of secondhand warm clothes have shot up in local markets as the severe cold continues to sweep the district, reports UNB.

A secondhand sweater, which was sold at Tk 40-50 two weeks back, is now selling at Tk 100-120. Prices of various quilts and mattresses have also gone up in the market. A piece of cloth used for quilt was sold at Tk 15 a month back and now is selling at Tk 25-26 per yard. Cotton price has also marked a rise by Tk 10-15 per kg.

### Two killed in road mishaps

NAOAGON, Jan 17: Two people, one of them an SSC candidate, were killed and two people injured in separate road incidents in the district recently, reports UNB.

Police said Anwarul Islam Prince, 16, an SSC candidate and son of A Samad of village Chakla in Mahadevpur, died on the spot when a truck hit a rickshaw in which he was travelling near a bridge on river Atrai.

In another incident, a man was killed and two others suffered critical injuries when a goods-laden tractor fell into a roadside ditch on Naogaon-Rajshahi road at Mallikpur in Manda upazila. The dead was identified as Shariful Islam, son of Shamser Ali of Chakmokter village.

### Paddy procurement drive begins

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 17: The government has launched procurement drive of Aman paddy and rice here to give price support to the growers, reports UNB.

Official sources said the government has fixed the target of procuring 1,590 mt of paddy and 2,920 mt of rice this year. The procurement drive that started from December 3 will continue till next month. District Food Department so far purchased 171 mt of paddy and 2,344 mt of rice. Procurement rate of paddy was fixed at Tk 8 per kg and rice Tk 12.50 per kg. There are 32 food godowns in the district.

### Relief money misappropriated

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 17: A ward commissioner of local pourashabha allegedly embezzled relief money allocated for the flood-affected people, reports UNB.

Locals alleged that commissioner of ward-number 12 Suzuddin embezzled the relief money after distributing a small amount to his relatives instead of genuine flood affected people. Agitated people brought out a protest procession Sunday and submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner demanding probe into the matter.

### Four alleged rapists held

JESSORE, Jan 17: Police arrested four alleged rapists from the town Monday night within two hours of their barbarous act, reports UNB.

Police said the arrested Ariful Islam Dipu, Saiful Islam Niru, Rezaul Sheikh and Motiar Rahman took a 15-year-old girl to a house near Bahadurpur Petrol Pump and raped her at about 8:30 pm. The girl was returning home from her relative's house along with her cousin. Receiving telephone call from her cousin, Kotwali police rushed to the spot and rescued the girl but the criminals managed to flee the scene. Later, police launched a hectic operation and arrested the alleged rapists within two hours. A case was filed with local police against them.

### Medical students demonstrate

BARISAL, Jan 17: Students of Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College staged demonstration on the campus on Tuesday to press home their 5-point demands, reports UNB.

The agitated students attacked the administrative building and the principal office. They also threatened to go for a tougher action programme from January 20, if their demands are not met within the period. Earlier, they submitted a memorandum to the principal to realise their demands, which include filling up the vacant posts of the teacher, repairing of students' dormitories, adequate supply of books to the library ad taking action against the outsiders.

### Timber seized

FENI, Jan 17: BDR personnel seized 195 cubic feet of Indian timber from a sawmill at GM Hat under Fulgazi upazila of the district on Friday night, reports BSS.

Acting on a secret information, BDR personnel seized the timber from the sawmill of Abdul Kuddus worth about Taka one lakh and 35 thousand.



Rajen Sarder, 85, of Kadgora, represents the Santal community who were brought here by the European planters from Santal Pargana for work in the indigo factory.

ter and austere sense of responsibility right from their boyhood.