

Bangladeshis in 51 enclaves go unaccounted in census

KURIGRAM, Jan 28: Bangladeshis living in 51 enclaves of Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts will go unaccounted in the fourth population census that began on Monday night, reports UNB.

Some five lakh people are living in the enclaves surrounded by Indian lands of Dinhat and Tufanganj subdivisions of Coochbihar district.

The Indian administration in Coochbihar district has not given permission to the entry of enumerators to the enclaves through

its territory.

Nirbahi Officer of Bhurungamari upazila Habibul Islam told that they have postponed the census programme in the enclaves in absence of permission of the Indian authorities for entry of enumerators to the enclaves through her land.

Deputy Commissioner AFM Solaman Chowdhury said he had officially communicated a request to his counterpart in Coochbihar to accord permission for enumerators to entry to the enclaves for the purpose of population cen-

sus. But there was no response till conclusion of the census.

Although citizens of Bangladesh the residents of the enclaves remained totally isolated from the mainland since partition of India in 1947. They remained unaccounted in the last population census also due to intransigent attitude of India in according permission to enumerators for entry there, officials said.

In 1990, voters were registered in 12 out of 51 enclaves. But no permission was given for entry to the enclaves during preparation of fresh voter list last year.

Lab test of tea to be mandatory before export

MOULAVI BAZAR, Jan 28: Laboratory test of Bangladeshi tea would be mandatory before export for determining the permissible level of pesticides in the item, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI) sources said it has undertaken programme to set up a laboratory for testing Maximum Residual Level (MRL) as the buyers are pressurizing to determine the MRL level in the exported tea.

Scientist at an international conference in Calcutta in 1993 said the international buyers including those from the EU, would not buy Bangladeshi tea leaves with excessive MRL.

Officials said a 'Pesticide Residual Laboratory' is being set up inside the BTRI to test MRL. International tender quotation has already been floated for procuring the equipment for the

proposed laboratory.

European Commission is funding the laboratory project.

Two chief scientific officers of the institute have already been trained on 'Residual Analysis' from 'Natural Resources Institute' of England.

Sources said, the laboratory would start functioning from June 2002.

Considering the long-lasting poisonous effect, uses of some pesticides were banned internationally. The uses of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides like heptachlor, DDT, dieldrin and endrin were banned in the tea gardens in Bangladesh but some tea gardens are using these collecting through smuggling.

To maintain the goodwill of Bangladeshi tea in the international market, BTRI will make it mandatory to test MRL of tea before export.

Power shortage hampers output in mills, factories

KHULNA, Jan 28: Production in the mills and factories in Khulna region is seriously being hampered due to power shortage, reports UNB.

Power Development Board sources said this region has been facing about 100 megawatts of power shortage per day due to the closure of most power units.

Power generation in four power units, out of six, at Goopara in Khulna Power Plant remained suspended for long while one of these units was closed on Wednesday due to mechanical fault.

Only one unit, which remains operative during peak hour, produces only 17 megawatts power, an official said.

Two power plants at Khulna and Bheramara can supply only 170 Megawatts of electricity

while national grid 50 megawatts as against the total demand of 300 megawatts.

Sources said 54 megawatts of electricity are supplied from Bheramara while 17 megawatts from Barisal and 116 megawatts from private power plants.

Power supply to hat and bazaris in the district and all the upazila headquarters remained stopped after dusk due to power shortage.

Not only that the authorities can supply power only half of demand to the people of some 21 districts in Khulna and Barisal divisions along with some parts of Faridpur district.

They will have to face power shortage until the two power units one at Khulna and the other at Bheramara resume power generation, official said.

4 more Habiganj villages get power facility

NABIGANJ (Habiganj), Jan 28: The villages Rustampur, Bytakhal, Futarchar and Jhalka under Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj district have come under electricity facilities, reports BSS.

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria performed the inauguration of these facilities at Rustampur Madrasa premises recently.

Presided over by well-known social worker of the locality Shah Shamsul Huda, the function was addressed, among others, by Dewan Farid Gazi MP, Chairman of the Rural Electrification Board Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Associate Professor of Dhaka University Dr Reza Kibria, district Awami League general secretary Dr Mushfiq Hossain Chowdhury, local UP Chairman AKM Fakhrul Islam, engineer Abdul Musabbir and president of the Habiganj Palli Biddut Samity Tofazzal Hossain.

Kibria said that the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is sparing no efforts for

the overall development of the country, and more and more areas are brought under rural electrification programme.

He said the government has stopped the wastage of huge money by establishing peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and is using the money saved from there for various socio-economic development.

The finance minister said the country witnessed bumper crops for four consecutive years and this amply testifies to the fact that the government is performing well in running the country.

Kibria said economic development is necessary to bring every village under power facility and the government is working towards that direction.

He said it is the prime task of all to bring the nation out of the curse of poverty and called for resisting the forces who are hatching conspiracies against the developmental activities through destructive politics.

Wheat farming on 72,000 hectares

BARISAL, Jan 28: A total of 27,060 hectares have been brought under high yielding variety of wheat cultivation here in 11 southern districts under Barisal Agriculture Extension Zone (BAEZ) in this dry season, reports BSS.

The districts are Barisal, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Rajbari and Sariatpur.

According to an official source, the production target had been fixed at 1,65,738 metric tons of wheat this year in this season in this region.

Of the total, 450 metric tons of wheat will be produced on 50 hectares in Jhalakathi district, 3,450 metric tons on 1,500 hectares in Barisal, 92 metric tons on 40 hectares in Pirojpur, 9,200 metric tons on 4,000 hectares in Bholia, 57,500 metric tons on

25,000 hectares in Faridpur, 36,800 metric tons on 16,000 hectares in Rajbari, 19,320 metric tons on 8,400 hectares in Madaripur, 13,600 metric tons on 6,000 hectares in Gopalganj, 25,300 metric tons on 11,000 hectares in Shariatpur, 92 metric tons on 40 hectares in Patuakhali and 69 metric tons on 30 hectares in Barguna district.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) will disburse as many as 9,000 metric tons of high yielding variety of seeds and 8,647 metric tons of different qualities of fertilisers among the farmers of the districts of this region.

A total of 8,25,000 hectares will be brought under wheat cultivation in 64 districts of the country this season. The production target has been fixed at 19,00,000 metric tons in these districts.

Mymensingh Press Club Award recipients

MYMENSINGH, Jan 28: Mymensingh Press Club has selected four eminent journalists and four writers to honour them with Mymensingh Press Club Award for the years 1997 to 2000, reports BSS.

M Mosharraf Hossain, Secretary of the Club said a journalist and a writer hailing from greater Mymensingh district will receive this annual award introduced in 1987. But the award, could not be distributed in due time due to some unavoidable reasons for last four years. He, however, disclosed the names of the eight dignitaries in two categories, selected for the award by the relevant committee.

The selected journalists are: Haroon Habib, Chief Editor and Managing Director of BSS, Mahfuz Anam, Editor of The Daily Star, AFM Mufazzal, Editor of the daily New Nation and Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, News Editor of the Daily Jugantar. The writers are: Humayun Ahmed, poet Al-Mujahidi, Mosaarraf Karim Manju and Yusuf Sharif.

According to the press club, the awards will be distributed very soon among the recipients.

Earlier, 18 distinguished personalities in the field of journalism and literature including Khaleque Dad Chowdhury, Mahan Lal Lahiri, Syed Abdus Sultan, Golam Samdani, Korayshi, Rahat Khan and Bazlur Rahman were honoured with the Mymensingh Press Club Award.

FFs receive monthly allowance

NARSINGDI, Jan 28: A total of 857 poor freedom fighters in six upazilas of the district received monthly allowance recently, reports agency.

Sitish Ranjan Dev, Deputy Commissioner of Narsingdi, inaugurated the distribution programme held at local stadium.

Advocate Asaduzzaman, President of district Awami League and Mahbubur Rahman, General Secretary of district Awami League, and Motaleb Pathan, Commander of Narsingdi district Muktojodha Sangsad, also spoke on the occasion.

Fake marriage registrar held

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 28: Police arrested a fake marriage registrar from his Huzarpur residence in the town Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said Nurul Alam, 27, was arrested from his house with some important papers upon a complaint lodged by locals.



The day labourers in Magura district have been passing very hard days due to non-availability of any type of odd job. Most often they spend time starving or half-fed. Some day labourers are seen waiting near Ramnagar bazaar in Sadar upazila of the district for any odd job from morning till mid-day, but in vain. --Star photo

1.11 lakh children deprived of basic education

SUNAMGANJ, Jan 28: Although primary education is compulsory over 1.11 lakh children here are deprived of basic education due to various reasons, reports UNB.

The reasons are attributed to vacant posts of teachers, adverse educational atmosphere, abject poverty of guardians and pitiable communication network in the district.

District Primary Education Office sources said some 2,249 villages in 83 unions of 10 upazilas have been brought under primary education programme.

There are 1,514 government and non-government primary schools where some 5.75 lakh children out of the total 6.87 lakh are prosecuting their studies.

However, there are no primary schools at 576 villages in differ-

ent upazilas of the district surrounded by haors (water body), according to official sources.

The number of villages where there are no primary schools is much higher than the official estimate, unofficial sources said.

Some 582 posts of teacher in various primary schools have been lying vacant. Of them, 98 are of headmasters while the rest are of the assistant teachers.

In addition, most of the schools have been facing various problems due to lack of necessary furniture, playgrounds, tube-wells and school buildings.

Another report from Habiganj says: The government under its Total Literacy Movement (TLM) programme 'Jagrata Habiganj' has set up some 13,492 education centres in eight upazilas including four municipalities of the district.

Official sources said, of the total, 7,005 centres were set up for women.

Of the total, some 1,620 centres were set up in Sadar, 869 in Ajmiriganj, 1,763 in Banichang, 1,161 in Lakhai, 1,973 in Madhabpur, 2,111 in Chunarughat, 1,578 in Bahubal and 1,956 in Nabiganj upazilas.

Besides, some 88 centres were set up in Habiganj, 96 in Madhabpur, 94 in Shyestaganj and 83 in Nabiganj municipalities.

A male teacher was appointed for each male centre while a female teacher for each female centre.

There are some 7,34,408 illiterate people in the district and under this programme some 30 people would be imported education in each centre.

Most rivers drying up

Rural economy faces setback in Sylhet region

SYLHET, Jan 28: Rural economy of greater Sylhet is facing setback as most of the rivers flowing through the region are fast drying up due to heavy deposition of silt, reports UNB.

River communication, one of the most important modes of transportation of Sylhet, Hobiganj, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj districts, is waning gradually due to siltation of the rivers.

'These districts possess bright prospect of economic potentials due to their strategic geographical locations; but gradual drying of major rivers is becoming a hurdle on its way,' observed local engineer who preferred anonymity.

The mighty rivers Surma, Kishora, Monu, Khowai and their off shoots as well as water bodies are being silted up with deposition of silts carried with the water mainly from upper catchments across the border during rainy season every year.

Although there is no estimation how much silt is being deposited every year, but an unofficial source said this figure would be around 80 lakh tons.

Experts say, due to sloping geographical structure, water with huge silt rolls down from

across the hills to lower lands of greater Sylhet during rainy season and ultimately deposits in the riverbeds.

As a result innumerable shoals have been emerged in the rivers Surma, Kishora, Monu, Khowai and other rivers originated from the hills or neighbouring India.

During rainy season, these rivers could not discharge water properly or endure heavy pressure resulting in flooding in the locality inflicting huge losses of lives and property.

In dry season, on the other hand, irrigation in croplands is being hampered seriously due to the drying up of water bodies and reservoirs.

Irrigation activities along the banks of the rivers Dhalai and Piyani are being hampered seriously as water flow in these rivers has almost stopped.

A large number of river ports were closed due to accumulation of silts in the riverbed, sources said. Thousands of boatmen, river vessel workers and labourers lost their jobs.

Besides, sources said, the frontier Tahirpur, Jamalganj, Doarabazar, Chatak, Sunamganj sadar and Companyganj of Sylhet and other areas are facing deser-

tification process due to drying up of the rivers.

A local engineer opined that if the course of the rivers could not be maintained properly, it would be disastrous for rural infrastructure.

In a bid to revive stream of the River Dhalai, the government took up 'Dhalai Stream Revive Project' in 1994 involving about Tk 5.2 crore. But after spending Tk 30 lakh the project was abandoned.

Similar fate is going to be happened for the Piyani river dredging project undertaken at a cost of Tk 100 crore. Nobody can say when the work will start.

Female drug trader held

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 28: An alleged female drug trader was arrested along with his son from South Ghorapara area on the outskirts of the town Tuesday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police arrested Laila Begum, 35, and her son Raju. Police also seized a huge quantity of heroin from the possession of Laila while four rounds of bullet from her son. Separate cases were filed.

News snaps

Housewife stabbed to death

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 28: Some assailants at Satghoria para in Taknaf stabbed a newly married Rohingya housewife to death on Monday night, reports UNB.

Locals said the victim Nurus Safa Begum, 18, got married with Zafar Alam of the area on December last and they were residing in a rented house leaving the Rohingya camp. On the fateful night terrorists led by Mustaq and Bailla of the village abducted her to a nearby place with ulterior motive and when her husband chased they left the place stabbing her to death. A case registered with the Taknaf police.

Non-iodised salt on sale

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 28: Defying the government ban a section of traders are selling non-iodised salt in the district, reports BSS.

The government has enacted a law in the mid eighties making compulsory to sell iodised salt in the markets in a bid to eradicate several iodine-deficiency disease like goitre, mental retardation and stunted growth. Some factories are producing non-iodised salt and are marketing the same as iodised one at various bazaars. Poor people buy the non-iodised salt being attracted by its low price. One kg of iodised salt is being sold at Taka 10 to Taka 12 against the non iodised salt between Taka 6 and Taka 7.

BDR personnel, smugglers clash

SATKHIRA, Jan 28: A clash between BDR and a group of smugglers left a youth injured at Sonabaria village in frontier Kalaroa Upazila last week, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash took place when the bootleggers attacked the BDR men as they halted a bus carrying Indian sugar, salt, spare parts, saree and other goods at Barik crossing at about 11:30 am. However, the smugglers managed to escape with contraband goods a youth, Lantu of the Sonabaria village, was injured when a BDR source hit him with a stick. He was rushed to Kalaroa Hospital in a critical condition.

Body recovered

KUSHITIA, Jan 28: Police recovered a body from a pond nearby Dinomoni High School at Aruapara in the town recently, reports BSS.

The dead was identified as Shahidul Islam, President, BNP Town Committee. Police sent the body to Kushitia General Hospital. After postmortem police handed over the body to his relations.

Foodgrains distributed

MAGURA, Jan 28: Some 333 metric tons of wheat and rice have been distributed among the 33,300 poor people in four upazilas of the district recently, reports UNB.

A local Relief and Rehabilitation official said each family received five kg of rice and same amount of wheat under the programme given from Prime Minister's relief and special fund. The destitute people in Sadar, Sripur, Muhammadpur and Shalikhia upazilas were benefited with the disbursement of the food grains.

12 shops gutted

MADARIPUR, Jan 28: Twelve shops were gutted in a fire at Sahebrampur in Kalkini upazila recently, reports UNB.

Two people, who were sleeping in their shops when the fire broke out, suffered serious burn injuries. Goods worth about Tk five lakh were damaged in the fire originated from an electric short circuit.

Indian spare parts seized

JESSORE, Jan 28: District taskforce and anti-smuggling team of BDR seized a truck laden with Indian smuggled spare parts worth Tk 20.43 lakh at Chowgachha on Jessore-Benapole highway recently, reports UNB.

Sources said the taskforce tried to stop a truck while patrolling on the highway but the driver managed to flee with his vehicle. Later the frightened driver deserted the truck in Chowgachha area. The seized spare parts along with the truck were handed over to the customs officials at Benapole.

Arms seized

SATKHIRA, Jan 28: Shyamnagar police in a drive in the Sunderbans recovered a firearm and several rounds of bullet, left by pirates, from a shoal in the river Chunu recently, reports UNB.

During the routine operation police challenged the armed pirates in the shoal and apprehending danger they fled into the deep forest leaving behind the firearm and ammunition.

Workshop for health workers

KHAGRACHHARI, Jan 28: A four-day training workshop on essential service package for health workers concluded at the auditorium of Press Club here last week, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) organised the workshop. A total of 27 health workers from the three hill districts took part in the training course. Khagrachhari District Council Chairman Jyotindra Lal Tripura inaugurated the workshop while Adviser to the Ministry of CHT Affairs Nurunnabi Chowdhury presided over the inaugural session.

Three killed in road mishaps

GOPALGANJ, Jan 28: Three people were killed in separate road accidents in the district on Sunday-Monday, reports UNB.

Police said two unidentified people died on the spot and six others were seriously injured when two trucks collided near Ghorapara on Gopalganj-Mollarhat road Sunday. In another incident, an SSC candidate, Rubel, 16, was killed when his motorcycle overturned in Moksudpur upazila, on Boalia road Monday when he was going to Boalia Bazar along with his friend. Separate cases were filed.

Body found

MANIKGANJ, Jan 28: Police recovered a body in the district Wednesday, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Khorshed, 30, of village Shashinara in Shibhalaya upazila. Police said unknown miscreants called Khorshed out of his house Tuesday morning and they left his body nearby a house after slaughtering him.

Girl abducted

SUNAMGANJ, Jan 28: A new-wed girl was abducted from Umednagar village in Sadar upazila Wednesday, reports UNB.

Villagers said a group of miscreants, allegedly led by Shahin Alam, picked up Halima, 18, three days after her marriage with Kamrul of Subidibazar in Sylhet. Alam, cousin of Halima, kidnapped her as she had turned down his marriage offer. Her mother Karimunnisa filed a case against Alam and six others.

Blacksmiths in misery

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 28: Lack of patronisation and price hike of essential inputs have wrecked the livelihood of over 6,000 blacksmiths in the district, reports UNB.

A large number of blacksmiths in Hossainpur, Katladi, Sadar, Tarail, Karimganj, Pakundia, Bhairab, Kullarchar, Bajitpur, Itra, Nikli, Austagram and Mitamain are passing the days in severe economic hardship. Local elite said NGOs should come up with necessary programmes to save this poor people, who usually make 'dao', axe, knife, kitchen knife and many other household appliances.

Two buses ransacked

BARISAL, Jan 28: Some angry students over trivial matters in Gournadi and Agoljhar upazilas ransacked two buses and beat up the drivers last week, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the students of Sarikal High School beat up the driver of a bus and ransacked it following an altercation with the conductor. The injured driver Abul Kashem was admitted to the hospital in a critical condition. Besides, the students of Galla High School also beat up another bus driver and damaged the vehicle at Agoljhar bus stand after the helper prevented them from boarding the bus.

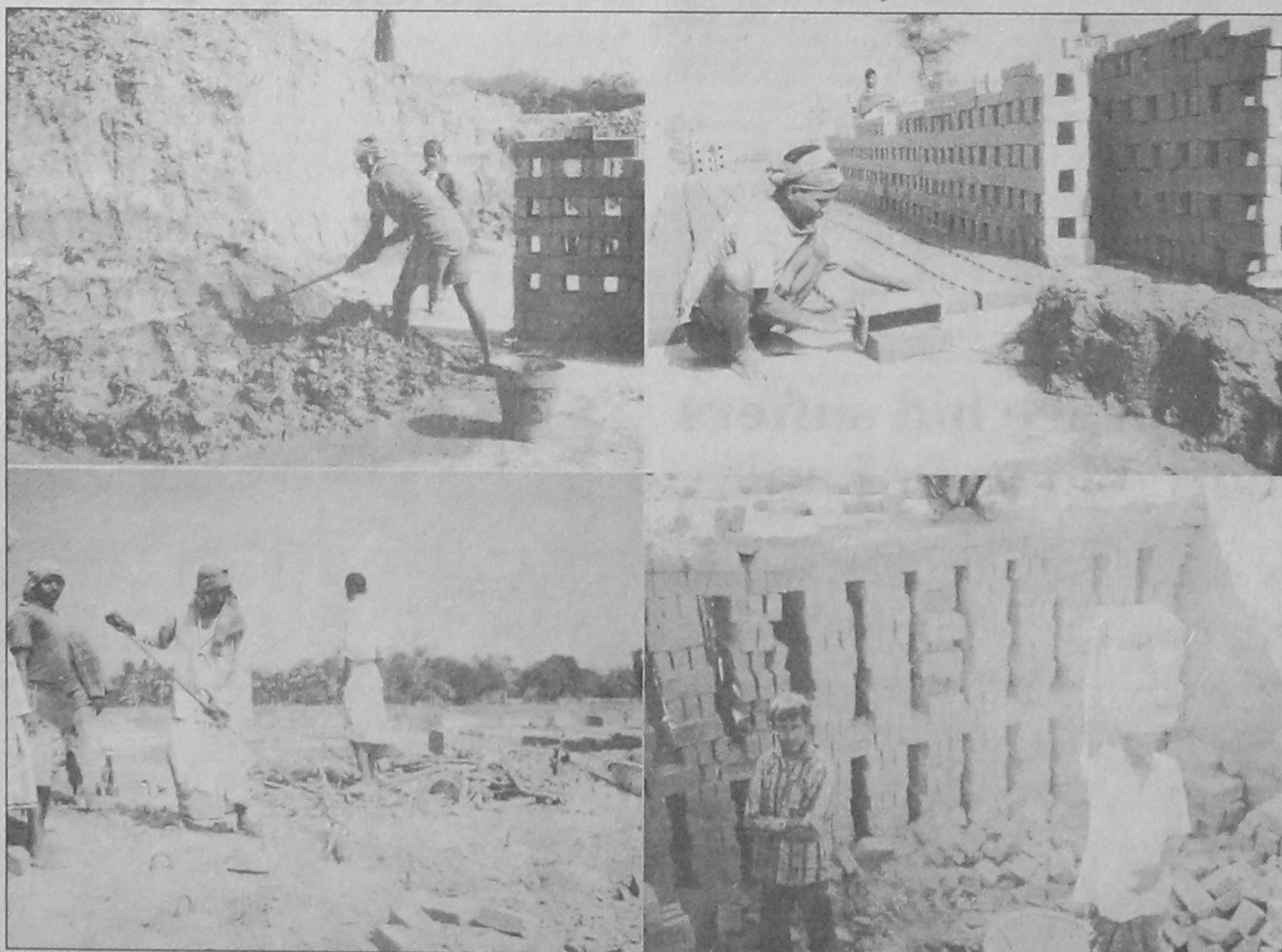
Indian sugar seized

JOYPUHAT, Jan 28: BDR personnel seized 3,265 quintal Indian sugar and 12 quintal cumin worth Tk 1.95 crore at Bhaduria bazaar in Nawabganj upazila of Dinajpur district recently, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, BDR men raided the bazaar area and seized 27 trucks laden with Indian sugar and cumin when the goods were being stored in local godowns and shops. Police, local UNO, UP chairman and members and elite were present during the seizure. Later the contraband goods were deposited with the Hill Customs Godown. A case was filed in this connection.

Various steps of manufacturing bricks

A photo feature by Kamran Reza Chowdhury



Bricks are essential ingredients of development activities. Here are some steps of manufacturing bricks in a traditional manner. In pictures on top (L-R) one worker is seen cutting earth at the initial stage of brick manufacture, while another worker has been preparing raw and kutcha bricks with a dice. Bottom pictures (L-R) show a labourer has been taking out bricks after the required burning and finally the finished bricks are being carried by a labourer to a truck for transporting elsewhere.