# Drug addicts up in Pabna

Extensive wheat cultivation

scheme taken up in Jhenidah

hectares to produce 2,760 mt in

Kotchandpur and 3,500 hectares to

needs about 2,145 mt of wheat

seeds for the cultivation. Because of

the deluge last year the farmers

905 metric tons of wheat seeds

under Agricultural Rehabilitation

Programme (ARP) while the

Bangladesh Agriculture

Development Corporation (BADC)

Farmers collect seed at the rate

When this correspondent

recently visited flood affected

Jinnanagar, Bashbaria, Bhairaba

and Samanta areas under

they started wheat farming with full

supplied another 83 metric tons.

of Taka 14.50 per kg from BADC.

The government has supplied

could not store seeds for the cultiva-

AED sources said the district

produce 80,00 mt in Moheshpur.

alleged the guardians

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah** 

has been taken up in the district this season.

An extensive wheat cultivation

programme has been taken up in

Jhenidah district this season, fixing

the target to produce 28,750 metric

busy cultivating wheat to make up

deficiency caused by severe flood

last year, according to local

Agriculture Extension Department

12.500 hectares of land under the

farming in the current season.

11,065 hectares of land were

brought under the cultivation last

up, 1,600 hectares of land will be

brought under the farming this

season to produce 3,680 mt of wheat

in Sadar; 3,200 hectares to produce

ares to produce 2,760 mt in

produce 4,140 mt in Kaliganj; 1,200 year's loss.

According to upazila-wise break-

AÉD has fixed a target to bring

Farmers in the district are now

tons of the crop.

(AED)

The district town of Pabna has virtually become a 'town of drugs' claiming at least 200 lives and destroying the lives

According to a number of surveys conducted by several non-government organisations, at least 200 people died here after taking drugs during 1987-2000

Besides, 67,000 youths have become addicted to drugs, including heroin and phensidyl, resulting in increasing of crimes and anti-social activities, the studies

Officials of local Narcotics Control Department admitted the drug-related deaths, but they could not give the

actual number of deaths. Labourers, rickshawpullers, bus and truck drivers, students, and even upper class people and teachers are

becoming addicted to drugs. Of the total addicts, some 12 per cent are women,

creating concern among the conscious people. Drugs are being sold at different markets and grocery shops on lanes and by-lanes so openly that it is easier to collect any kinds of drug than that of the betel and nuts,

A farmer at village Kabirpur under Shailakupa upazila in Jhenidah district

takes care of wheat plants at a field. An extensive wheat farming programme

Harinakundu; 1,800 hectares to enthusiasm to make up the last

Such rising trend of drug addiction is blamed for deterioration of the law and order situation in the district. But, the members of law enforcing agencies are not serious in taking steps in this regard, it is alleged.

created public nuisance on different busy roads. A social worker, on condition of anonymity, said a section of influential people and musclemen are

Sometimes, the addicts after taking the intoxicants

engaged in the drug business while the law-enforcers help them in exchange of handsome amount of money. Two centres were established in the town in 1985 to provided treatment to the addicted people. But the centres could not carry out their activities any longer due to

Some 800 addicted had been admitted to centres and 7,500 got treatment till 1988. During the period, 81 people, including college and university students had died.

district jail, are drug addicted and the number is rising. Guardians of a number of addicted youths are handing over their children to police to keep them in safe custody, said a police official.

It is learnt that some 423 prisoners, out of 1,013, in the

Some of the farmers said that they are interested to cultivate Kanchan variety of wheat instead of

Sonalika variety as Kanchan

ensures about 90 maunds per

hectare while Sonalika yields some

said the weather in the district is

almost favourable till now and the

farmers are expecting good wheat

grave detected

in C'nawabgani

Huge fossils of liberation war mar-

tyrs were dug out recently from a newly detected mass grave at

Tikrampur village in Gomstapur upazila of Chapainawabganj

The grave was shoveled up in

presence of Deputy Commissioner

of the district M Nurul Haq, NDC

Santosh Kumar Adhikari, political

leaders and local people on Feb 16.

A good number of bones, skulls,

According to the villagers, during

gold-chains and metal currencies of

Pakistan period were recovered

the liberation war Pakistani occupa-

tion forces and their local collabora-

tors and 'rajakars' had caught 13

people and buried them in the grave

from the grave.

When contacted AED sources

75 maunds per hectare.

New mass

UNB, Chapainawabganj

production.

# Mango trees start blooming

Falgoon, the eleventh month of

Mango trees in greater Raishahi district are laden with buds. Mango traders, locally called as barials, have started visiting mango Chapainawabganj, Naogaon and Natore districts. Barials buy mango trees start blooming.

although it was an off year for

Mango grows well usually in every alternate year. This season is on-year. And mango farmers expect good harvest this year. Most mango trees have started blooming abundantly, indicating a good har-

According to divisional office of Agriculture Extension Department (AFD), there are about seven lakh matured mango trees stretching on nine lakh hectares of lands in Chapainawabganj, the hub of mango cultivation in the country.

some 4.08 lakh trees stretching on 7.15 lakh hectares in Rajshahi, 3.24 Chapainawabganj, about 1.50 lakh metric tons in Rajshahi, one lakh metric tons in Naogaon and 80,000 tons in Natore in every on-year.

Greater Raishahi district produces almost 70 per cent of the total mangoes in the country. More than 150 varieties of mangoes are grown throughout the region.

The popular varieties are Fazli. Langra, Khirshapati, Gopalbhogh, Mohanbhogh Himsagar Aswini Raibhogh, Dudhsagar, Sandhvabhogh, Badshabhogh, Kalua, Ramipasand and Shurma

The Mango Research Centre in Chapainawabganj recently has introduced two new varieties Amrapali and Mohananda. The Amrapali variety, developed from Indian origin, has already gained popularity in the northern districts.

# **NEWS SNAPS**



Flower is a source of joy for ever. These full-bloom merrygold and red seasonal flowers prove it again. Hundreds of passers-by enjoy the beauty of nature every day while passing by the office of the police super in Sirajganj this season.

### Spurious liquor kills 2 brothers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Two brothers died after they took spurious liquor on Tuesday in Siraigani town. They were identified as Abdul Karim, 40, and Moselm Uddin, 37, son of late Ismail Hossain. Both the brothers were rickshaw pullers.

# Rice trader murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

An old rice trader in Damaich Bazaar under Tarash upazila in Sirajganj district was murdered at his shop on Monday night.

The victim was identified as Refatullah, 80, of Hemnagar village under the upazila. Police said the victim was sleeping at his shop when a gang of hoodlums murdered him with the sharp weapons. The cause of the murder could not be known. Police recovered the body and sent to Sirajganj General Hospital for autopsy. A case was lodged with police.

#### Two tribal boys burnt to death

Two tribal boys were burnt to death in a fire at Baishari bazaar in Naikhangchhari upazila under Bandarban district on Wednesday. The victims were identified as Aung Saching and Chathoai Charu. Police said the fire originated from a lamp at a grocery shop at midnight

#### UNB, Bandarban

burning the two to death while they were asleep. AUD case was filed with police. Another report from Shariatpur adds: Three people, including a little minor girl, drowned n Naria upazila on Thursday and Friday. The dead were identified as Jalu Hawladar, 38, o

Fatejangpur union parisad, Russel, 12, of Dingamanik union and Tania, 7, of Rajnagar UP.

# Eye camp begins

have jointly organised the camp.

A weeklong eye camp began at Yusuf Ali High School in Rajapur upazila under Jhalakati district Tuesday. Meanwhile, some 50 poor eye patients were operated upon while 500 other given prescriptions along with medicines and spectacles free of cost. Patuakhali Eye Hospital of Bangladesh Blind Welfare Association and Yusuf Ali High School

# Bridge construction work begins

In a bid, to develop rural communication network, construction work on two bridges in Sadar upazila under Rajbari district began at a cost of Tk 11 lakh. Local MP Kazi Keramat Ali inaugurated the construction work of the two bridges at Shaheed Wahabpur and Alipur unions on Friday.

Apart from this, work on 275 small projects is progressing in full swing in four upazilas of the district. Some 1,420 metric tons of wheat has been sanctioned to implement the projects under infrastructure reforms programme. Work on the projects is expected to be completed

#### Students yet to get textbooks

Although the new academic year has begun two months back, students of Laxmipur district are yet to get textbooks, hampering educational activities. On the other hand, the board books are being sold in the bookstalls at a higher price than the price inscribed on the books. The students are forced to buy lower quality note books with the board books," said a

A bookstall owner said they have to bring books from Dhaka with higher price, which ompels them to fix the new rate of the books. It is also alleged that different schools select English and Bengali grammar books of different publishers instead of books authorised by

#### Int'l Mother Language Day observed

UNB. Panchagarh

Shaheed Day and International Mother Language Day was observed in Panchagarh district with due respect on Wednesday. Various socio-cultural organisations had chalked out elaborate programmes including discussions, poetry recitation, essay contest, book fair and cultural function, to observe the day

DC Rabiul Islam and Police Super Azgar Ali placed wreaths at the Shaheed Minar paying lowing tribute to the memories of the martyrs. Another report from Kushtia adds: Shahee Day and International Mother Language Day was observed in Kushtia district. Different socio-cultural organisations drew up various programmes, including discussion, on the occasion. National flags were hoisted half-mast while black flags atop the educational

### 5,849 TB, leprosy patients treated

Atotal of 5849 Tuberculosis (TB) and leprosy patients were treated in Habiganj district during last five years. Official source said, 5785 Tuberculosis (TB) and 2304 leprosy patients were diagnosed during the period. Out of them 3,695 TB and 2154 leprosy patients treated.

Now upazilawise treated figures are as follows: Habiganj TB-175, leprosy-21, Nabiganj 174 and 31, Ajmiriganj-68 and 4, Baniachang-163 and 17, Lakhai-119 and 11, Bahubal-145 and 13, Chumarighat 173 and 33, Madhabpur 130 and 20. The success rate of leprosy eatment is 93.5 per cent.



Syeda Yarun Nessa Khanam, a prominent folk singer of Sylhet region, enthralling the audience at a function of Parasparik, Moulvibazar on the occasion of its 17th founding anniversary recently.

ABDUL WADOOD, Rajshahi mango production.

Bangla calendar, has come again and bees are busy roaming around mango trees, which have started blooming. Sweet odour of mango buds is in the air. It is mango season.

orchards in rural areas of Raishahi. orchards from farmers when the

According to sources with Rajshahi regional office of the Agriculture Information Service (AIS), farmers in the region harvested good production last year,

On the other hand, there are

lakh trees on 6.78 lakh hectares in Naogaon and 2.5 lakh trees on about three lakh hectares in Natore. The growers produce more than

2.50 lakh metric tons of mangoes in

# IRRI-Boro farming hampered in Thakurgaon district

## Hundreds of deep, shallow tubewells inoperative

**UNB**, Thakurgaon

After four consecutive bumper productions the Irri-Boro paddy cultivation is being hampered seriously in Thakurgaon district as hundreds of deep and shallow tubewells remained inoperative.

The large number of deep and shallow tubewells could not be operated as the authorities of Palli Bidyut Samity disconnected the power lines for nonpayment of outstanding power bills.

seedlings in absence of irrigation hampering the boro cultivation in the current season adversely. Usually the farmers cultivate 15,000 hectares of land by mid-February but only 5,000 to 6,000 hectares have

Farmers could not prepare the land for planting

so far been cultivated this year due to shortage of irriga-Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) officials this season though 60 days have been passed as they could not prepare their land due to lack of water supply. DAE has set a target to cultivate 37,500 hectares of land in Thakurgaon district in the current season.

On Feb 13, the farmers of Boda upazila brought out a demonstration demanding restoration of tubewell power

Some 66 tubewells out of 76 are lying inoperative in Boda upazila alone, farmers said. DAE has already put forward some recommenda-

tions to the Agriculture Ministry for immediate steps to restore electric connections to the deep tubewells. It also recommended for re-installation and repair of

inoperative electric motors, transformers and disordered deep tubewells driven by diesel

Farmers submitted a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner and Director of the Project on January 28 to press home their demand.

molasses, they added. At the same

time indiscriminate use of date trees

as fuel in brickfields should be

stopped and date trees should be

planted in large scale. The date

molasses may be turned into an

exportable item through application

from date trees is from November to

February. The extractors are locally

known as 'gachhi'. The process of

extraction juice is matured in

November or early December. But

this year hundreds of date trees

trees, extractors or 'gachhis' are not

now available and if available, they

are reportedly very much reluctant

to this job. When contacted some

extractors Abdus Salam Mia, Abdul

Aziz Howladar and Kamal Uddin

spondent that the seasonal job was

profitable once, but now it is a

loosing concern. They also added

that unruly and terrorist youths of

the locality forcibly take away the

juice pots. locally called 'hari' very

often at night. So they do not dare to

take the risk of processing date

IPRA, there were more than one

lakh date trees in the district in 1999

and production of date molasses

was 2,000 maunds. Earning from

molasses of date Taka one crore

during the last season. But it is

apprehended that production of

date molasses will fall sharply in the

current season due to large scale

felling of date trees.

According to survey of NGO

Mia of different areas told this corre

According to the owners of date

The peak time for extracting juice

of modern technology.

were lying unprocessed.

# said seedlings of 40-45 days are sufficient enough for the plantation but farmers could not plant the seedlings

molasses and 'patali' production in Madaripur is losing its past glory due to lack of marketing facilities, shortage of firewood and depletion of

Date molasses and 'patali' in Madaripur district was so rich in quality and taste in the past that its name was mentioned in the books on geography. Thousands of maunds of molasses and 'patali' were prepared in the district every year and sent to other parts of the country from different markets here everyday. 'Patali gur' of natural brown colour and chemically whitened were produced all over the

Buyers from far-flung areas of

# **Production of date molasses**

flavour of 'Nalen Patali' and 'Nalen

Gur' made of newly extracted date

juice drives people crazy to have a

in production of date molasses and

'patali' in Madaripur. The flavour of

date juice and 'payesh', cooked with

boiled date juice still tickles the

nostrils of thousands of people. But

prices of date juice, 'patali' and date

molasses have gone beyond the

purchasing capacity of the poor and

containing eight to 10 glasses of

juice sells at Taka 16 to 20. One

kilogram of patali sells at Taka 35 to

Taka 40 in the retail market. A small

jar of date molasses sells at Taka

But, nowadays, it has lost its past

glory due to depletion of date trees.

indiscriminate felling of date trees

for fuel and construction of houses

is a regular feature in the district.

Facilities relating to marketing of

date juice products and preserva-

tion of the same beyond winter

season are totally absent. Scarcity

of firewood for boiling date juice is

another problem that has led to the

Mustafapur Bazaar, Takerhat

Bazaar, Rajoir Bazaar, Kalkini

Bazaar, Shibchar Bazaar and

Charmuguria Bazaar are the main

markets of date molasses and

'patali'. The government initiative

can save this profitable sector, local

The proper incentives and

depletion of date trees.

businessmen said

A small jar of raw date juice

But there has been a drastic fall

taste of these products.

common people.

100 to Taka 170.

date trees.

# falls in Madaripur tors to increase production of

#### BSS, Madaripur the country would flock to different markets in the district to buy 'patali' The traditional and profitable date and molasses packed in earthen iars of different sizes. The sweet

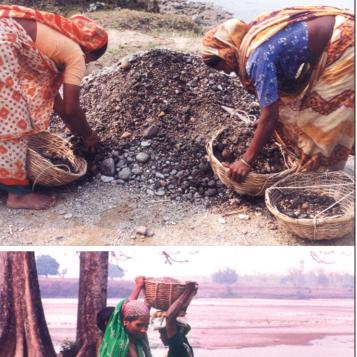
#### after killing them in a brushfire. The recovered bones and skulls were handed over to the local police station as per the directive of the Speaking on the occasion, the

DC said the district administration would take necessary steps to district in plenty.

# Women as stone collectors



A vast resource of stones has been detected in the riverbed and under the soil in different parts of Panchagarh district. The stones are being utilised in the development works and in constructing roads and highways in various districts of the northern region. Prices of such stones are also cheaper while wages of the labourers are nominal. These working women of Tetulia have revealed that after a day's hard toil each of them receives only Taka 25-30. Usually women do the uphill task. (Left) Working women engaged in extracting stones from the River Mahananda, (top right) they are dumping stones at a certain place and (bottom right) finally they clean the dumped stones.





# patronisation might help the extrac-Parasparik celebrates 17th founding anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

'Parasparik Moulvibazar', a cultural, educational and sports organisation of Moulvibazar, which has been helping protect the social values in a period of crisis of values, celebrated its 17th founding anniversary recently

Colourful programmes were arranged on the occasion.

An attractive cultural function was held on this connection at the local Saifur Rahman Auditorium. The entire function was divided into two separate sessions. 'Muktadhara' a brief discussion session which was presided over by Sultana Shamsun Nahar Begum, president of the Parasparik Moulvibazar. GKM Nurul Ameen, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Moulvibazar attended the session of discussion as the chief guest. The discussion programme was addressed by Advocate Mujibur Rahman, president of the Moulvibazar Bar Association, Saima Ahmed, principal of a local KG School and Shameem Ara Begum, general secretary of Parasparik, Moulvibazar.

'Anandadhara' was the second and final session of the function. Anandadhara was started with an address by Nurjahan Ara Begum. wife of the DC. Prominant folk singer of Sylhet region Syeda Yarun Nessa Khanam and another prominant Tagore singers of the region Chhaya Roy enthralled the audience by performing the regional songs of Sylhet, Tagore and Nazrul songs respectively. Besides this, a recital programme was also arranged and folk dances were performed by a group of children of age group between 6 to 12 years.

## College teacher stabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

An associate professor of Physics Department of Rajendra University College was stabbed and robbed in Faridour town recently.

Prof Shamsur Rahman Shelu came under attack on Ismail Road while returning home. Muggers numbering four armed with knives stabbed him in the left thigh and snatched Taka 1500