

Upazila roundup

SAVAR

Earth filling of Dhaka EPZ area complete

Jan 5: Fifty per cent of the earth filling work of the project area of Dhaka Export Processing Zone here has been completed, an official handout said on Saturday, reports BSS.

The Taka 57.30 crore project is expected to be completed by 1993. Ninety industrial units would be established in the project-area spreading over 74 acres.

Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan on Saturday visited the project area. Local member of the Jatiya Sangsad M Niamatullah Sabu and Chairman of Bang-ladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) were present.

The Industries Minister called upon the BEPZA for rapid completion of the infra-structural works in the project area.

He hoped that entrepreneurs from Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea and other countries would come forward for setting up industries in the Dhaka EPZ.

COX'S BAZAR

Meeting on Rohingya refugees

Jan 5: A high level meeting was held on Saturday here to discuss the problems of influx of Arakanese Muslims through different border points to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Held at the local Circuit House, the meeting was presided over by Additional Secretary of Home Ministry Abdul Hamid Choudhury. It was attended, among others, by Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Omar Faruq, BDR Sector Commander Col. Ali Hossain, Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar Dauduzzaman, Deputy Commissioner of Bandarban Ataur Rahman Majumdar and the Police Superintendents of the two districts.

The meeting directed the Deputy Commissioners of Cox's Bazar and Bandarban to prepare a list of the Rohingya refugees and take appropriate measures for their temporary stay in different areas.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has not yet received any response from Myanmar side for holding second flag meeting on the border issues. As a result a uncertain situation was prevailing at the border areas.

PABNA

600 transport workers stage sit-in programme

Jan 5: Transport workers on Friday staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the Transport Owners' Association office in the town demanding their appointment letters, reports UNB.

About 600 workers staged the demonstration when the North Bengal Owners' Association was holding a meeting in the office.

Later, the workers held a rally which was addressed by Pabna Truck Workers Union Secretary Shimul Biswas and Bus Workers Union President Rafiqul Islam Rafiq.

About 20 per cent of the owners, most of them are the leaders of the owners' association, did not issue appointment letters to the workers, ignoring government directives.

KUSHTIA

Foundation of bridge on Hisna river laid

Jan 5: The foundation stone of a 100-feet bridge on the river Hisna was laid by State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Kahn at Bheramara in Kushtia on Saturday, reports UNB.

Supervised by the directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation and financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the bridge would be completed by October next at a cost of Taka 34 lakhs.

Selina Shaheed MP and USAID Director in Bangladesh Mary C. Kilgore were present at the function.

On completion, the bridge will facilitate better communication between the Bheramara Headquarters and Raita Railway station with the villages on the opposite bank of the Hisna River.

The bridge will be very useful to the villages on both banks of the river for cultivation of land, transportation as well as marketing of agricultural production.

NILPHAMARI

Sink differences for greater national interest

Jan 5: Communications Minister Oli Ahmed has said difference of opinion was nothing new in a democratic system. But the Parliament should be the highest seat for the exposition of such differences, not the public through farces, he said, reports BSS.

He called upon all to work whole heartedly for the development of the country and sink petty differences of opinion for greater national interest.

Addressing a public meeting at Chilhati Government Degree College ground under Domar of Nilphamari district, he said the politics of the present government was aimed at simultaneous development of all parts of the country.

Presided over by A M Khairul Islam the meeting was addressed by Rezaul Karim Basunia and other local leaders.

MAGURA

Tk 55 lakh for construction of 3 bridges

Jan 5: A sum of Taka 54.85 lakh is to be spent for construction of three bridges in Sadar upazila during the current fiscal year under the Annual Development Programme, reports UNB.

According to an official source, of the total, Taka 20.30 lakh has been sanctioned for construction of a bridge on Baorkhali canal, Taka 20.23 lakh for a bridge on Alomkhali canal and Taka 14.32 lakh for a bridge on Narankhali canal.

The source also informed that construction work on all the bridges will start this month and is expected to be completed by June next.

JAMALPUR

Cooperative body executives

Jan 5: Election of Executive Committee of Jamalpur Sadar Upazila Central Cooperative Society and Bank was held on here, recently, reports BSS.

A twelve-members Executive Committee was elected with Mr Abdul Awal as Chairman and Mr Ismail Hossain Vice-Chairman. Mr Harunur Rashid Khan, Cooperative Officer conducted the election.

NETRAKONA

Firewood use in brickfields rampant

Jan 5: Despite government ban, wood is being rampantly used in the brickfields as fuel in all the ten upazilas of the district, reports UNB.

More than 70 brickfields with single and double burners which have resumed production, have been burning about 200 maunds of wood each per day.

Some brickfield owners told UNB that firewood could be managed on credit but coal had to be purchased in cash, which was not readily available.

Plants and bamboo clusters are being destroyed without replantation quickening the pace of desertification in the district, some environmentalists said.

Government ban on use of firewood in the brickfields is flouted with impunity, local leaders complained.

MALJDE COURT

Procurement of aman in progress

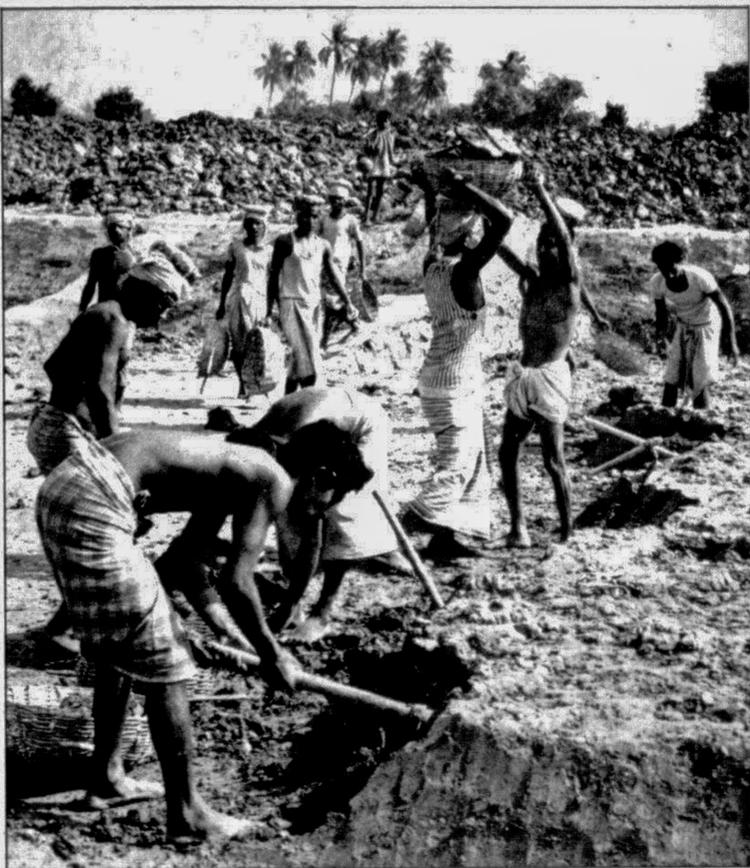
Jan 5: The aman paddy procurement drive has been going on the district since November 15, last, reports UNB.

One thousand tons of aman paddy will be procured from 6 upazilas of the district during the current harvesting season, officials said.

The paddy will be purchased at the rate of Taka 245 per maund.

District Food Office source said, 3,000 tons of paddy will be procured through 8 purchasing centres of Sadar upazila, 400 tons will be procured through 7 purchasing centres of Haliya upazila, 50 tons through 1 purchasing centre of Begumganj upazila, 40 tons through 1 purchasing centre of Chutkhal upazila, 80 tons through 2 purchasing centres of Scribag upazila and 150 tons through 2 purchasing centres of Companiganj upazila.

The drive will continue till March 31 this year.



FOOD FOR WORKS PROGRAMME: The works on the projects all over the country are in progress -Star Photo

Services inadequate in Railway Western Zone

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 5: The facilities for the passengers in Western Zone of Bangladesh Railway are quite inadequate.

A railway source disclosed that the Western Zone is beset with manifold problems for which the normal activities are hampered.

It is learnt that there are 231 stations under the Western Zone of Bangladesh Railway. A total of 124 trains including inter-city expresses, locals and mails run every day in broad and meter gauge lines.

It is informed that more than two crore passengers travel in this zone every year. The average yearly income is between Taka 60 and 80 crores.

Most of the railway stations of the zone have no requisite amenities for the passengers, it is alleged. The toilets in the stations are dirty and the waiting rooms are not equipped with furniture for which the passengers suffer much. Sometimes, the passengers can not stay in the waiting room for the bad smell coming out of the toilets.

It may be mentioned here that the passengers had to wait for a long time at the stations for the delay of the trains on different routes of the zone. The existing waiting rooms

meant for first class, second class and female passengers can not accommodate the travellers. The woman and child passengers are the worst sufferers.

It is often found that some non-passengers are gossiping or sleeping in the waiting rooms. This class of people use to occupy the seats in the ladies waiting rooms.

At every stations, there are lots of footless man and women. The stations have become their homes where they cook foods, take bath and sleep. Some of the stations have become the dens of anti-social activities. All these activities leave every stations unhealthy.

A good number of stations constructed during British regime and these are not maintained properly for a long time. The passengers have to suffer much in the absence of maintenance.

It is alleged that the misuse of machinery, spare parts and fuel are rampant in the zone.

There are reports of huge sale of diesel and mobile from some stations by some unscrupulous staff of the zone. The group is so strong that they threaten the concerned authority with dire consequences, it is alleged.

The porters at the stations

take higher charges for carrying goods at their sweet will. The passengers are harassed in some cases, it is informed. Some of these porters are allegedly involved in most of the irregularities in different stations of the zone.

Concerned authorities have been urged to take stern actions against all the irregularities of the stations of the zone and thus mitigate the sufferings of the crores of passengers.

The students' union election of the Belkuchta College was held here on January 2 peacefully.

Out of the total 16 posts, BCL (II-A) got nine posts including the posts of VP while JCD got seven posts including GS and AGS.

Abdus Sabur of BCL was elected VP and Sohel Rana Liton was elected GS in the election.

It is learnt that out of total 1107 voters 914 have cast votes in the election. Four panels including BCL, JCD, Islami Chhatra Sibbir and Sangrami Chhatra Samaj took part in the election.

It may be mentioned here that after a demand for re-election by the JCD supporters, the ballot papers of the election have been kept in sealed packets.

gating the public sufferings. Beggars are increasing in number in the upazila and district headquarters causing concern to the social leaders and citizens.

There has been a continuous influx of beggars both male and female from the rural areas over the last few months.

Acute food crisis and unemployment in the dry season have compelled destitutes to seek jobs in the urban areas and failing to get any work, they resort to begging or immoral activities.

Bus and railway stations, launch terminals, stadium areas and corridors of government offices are full of alms seekers.

GAZIPUR: Mr. Jasimuddin Chowdhury, DC inaugurating an eye camp here which was conducted by local Islami Trust with the help of Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd. -Star Photo

Notes from Patuakhali

PATUAKHALI, Jan 5: The monthly meeting of the local Development and Co-ordination Committee was held recently with Deputy Commissioner Sheikh Md Salahuddin in the chair, reports UNB.

Official sources said, the meeting stressed the need to attain self-sufficiency in food sector under agricultural rehabilitation programme.

The Deputy Commissioner advised the concerned department to take necessary measures to combat the pest menace in the region.

Mentionable that vast areas of land in Maukaran, Hetalla, Sree Rampur, Laukati and Dumki villages of Sadar upazila of the district were attacked by pests causing extensive damage to standing crops.

The meeting also discussed the progress of on-going projects of family planning, EPI programme, public health universal primary education, water supply and water purification.

The DC also called upon the officials to make the canal digging programme, to be undertaken in the district during the current fiscal year, a success.

Works on 5 WDB plans in progress

Water Development Board (WDB) has taken up five projects involving an amount of Taka 49 lakh in the Galachipa Upazila of the district during the current fiscal year.

According to official sources, the projects, under financial assistance of International Development Association, include construction of embankment and sluiceways.

The work on the projects is progressing fast and is expected to be completed by June next.

After completion, about 5000 hectares of land will be saved from salinity and flash flood, the sources added.

Scarcity of food for migratory birds

The local and migratory birds are gradually disappearing from the district due to indiscriminate killing and scarcity of feed in the beels and haors.

According to an expert, of many species of birds seen here, 200 are winter birds which migrate from the Siberian region to avoid the biting cold.

These birds locally known as Dighari, Kaldighary, Surails, Bathush, Pankouri, Burti, Storcks, Ilorons, Dahuk and Koa were found abundantly in the beels and haors of the district during the winter season.

But scarcity of fish, the main food of these birds, has compelled large flocks to fly elsewhere.

On the contrary, a large number of hunters are engaged in killing the guest birds indiscriminately despite government ban on bird-catching or shooting.

Local leaders and concerned authorities have urged the government to deploy security forces here and to devise ways and means for protection and preservation of birds.

Distribution of seeds

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) has taken up a programme to distribute 6 lakh kgs of High Yielding variety seeds during the current season in four southern districts.

The districts are Barisal, Jhalakathi, Projpur and Bhola. Official sources said the seeds will be distributed through BADC sales centres till February next.

According to another report Sonali Bank has undertaken a scheme to disburse Taka 10 crore loan in 16 southern districts of Khulna Division in the current financial year.

Bank sources said the disbursement of loan has already been started and is likely to continue till March this year.

The loan will be utilised to procure seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural inputs to help boost boro cultivation.

Annual scout rally

The annual scout rally of the district will be held Kuakata Sea Beach in February next.

Official sources said, the scout rally of all the units of the district will be held from February 11 to 15.

All the units of the district have been advised to take necessary preparations to make the annual rally a success.

Bridge opened

The newly constructed bridge over the river Pangushia on Madrasa Road of Patuakhali Sadar upazila was opened for traffic on Friday.

According to an official source, the Local Government Engineering Bureau (LGEB) has constructed the bridge at a cost of Taka 29 lakh under Flood Rehabilitation Programme of the government.

Mr M Keramat Ali, Minister for Post and Telegraph, formally inaugurated the bridge on December 27.

Cold wave leaves 5 dead in C'nawabganj

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 5: Cold wave that sweeping across the country claimed 5 people in the district during the last week, reports UNB.

According to informed sources, the victims were identified as Saillen Dey (28), of village Azmatpur, Moksed (61), of village Laxmipur and Ehsan (50), of village Dharampur of Shifganj upazila and Amin Uddin (60) of village Dorgapara of sadar upazila.

Another victim, an old woman of village Maharajpur of sadar upazila could not be identified immediately.

Want of warm clothes aggravated the sufferings of the poor people in the district.

The biting cold compelled the people to keep themselves inside their houses after sun-down stopping outdoor activities.

The number of child labourers is gradually increasing in all five upazilas including the district town.

According to a survey conducted by a local NGO, about 8,000 children aged between 8 and 10 are engaged in different occupations to maintain their livelihood as well as to support their families.

Children are compelled to take up jobs in hotels, restaurants, motor garages, bicycle repairing shops, welding workshops, factories, bakeries, brickfields, construction installations and shops due to extreme poverty.

Besides, many work as shoe shine boys, domestic servants and cowboys and girls are engaged mostly as made servants.

Secretary of the organisation, Zahurul Islam Bhottu said having no other alternative the floating people in urban and rural areas compelled their children to take hard work to support their moribund families.

According to International Labour Laws, children below the age of 15 are not allowed to take up hard work, he added.

122 registry offices in pitiable conditions

About 122 registry offices in 16 northern districts are in dilapidated conditions due to lack of proper care and maintenance hampering official work for a long time.

The districts are Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Natona, Naogaon, Pabna, Sirajganj, Bogra, Joypurhat, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Panchagarh and Thakurgaon.

Most of these offices are housed in abandoned and rented pucca or semi-pucca buildings which have developed cracks and holes. Rain water seeping into the offices has been damaging the valuable documents.

Besides, the documents and balam books have been preserved haphazardly due to lack of adequate accommodation.

In absence of proper care and spraying of insecticides, these books are being damaged by the rain water and insects, the sources added.

Diarrhoea claims 8, attacks 100 in 3 days

PABNA, Jan 5: Diarrhoea claimed 8 lives including two children and attacked over 100 in four villages of sadar upazila during the last three days, reports UNB.

According to official sources, the victims were identified as Yusuf Ali (50), and Razia Khatun (5), of village Hemayetpur, Akhtar Ali Sheikh (55), of village Mahmudpur, Diljan Bibi (45), Osman Khan (30), and Khabir Mollah (38), of village Hazirhat and Tomizuddin (25), and Karuna (7) of village Dogachi.

Local Health Control Room sources said, scarcity of drinking water and taking of adulterated food were the main reasons behind the outbreak of the disease.

A total of 1,10,760 acres of land in nine upazilas of the district will be brought under boro cultivation programme in the current season.

Of the total 1,01,734 acres of land will be brought under High Yielding Variety (HYV) and 9,026 acres of local variety.

The production target of rice during the period has been fixed at 1,86,825 metric tons, an official source said.

Besides, 64,220 acres of land will be brought under wheat, 2,717 acres potato, 35,058 acres pulses and 34,985 acres mustard cultivation, the sources added.

About 42,540 metric tons of wheat is expected to be produced this season.

The government has taken adequate measures to supply seeds and fertilizers to the farmers of the district.

The condition of almost all the primary schools of the district has long been a precarious state hindering proper education of children.

A total of 78 primary schools which attained government registration about 18 years ago have not yet allegedly received any financial grant.

Scarcity of drinking water in Borguna

BORGUNA, Jan 5: Acute scarcity of pure drinking water has been prevailing in the rural areas here for a long time causing intestinal disorders, reports UNB.

More than 115 tubewells that went out of order about three months back have not yet been repaired or resunk.

The villagers claimed that the tubewells in the rural areas frequently go out of order due to lack of proper care, repair and maintenance. The concerned officials rarely visit rural areas to see for themselves the condition of the tubewells, they alleged.

There are many villages where not a single tubewell is in operation. Consequently, villagers are compelled to procure impure water from rivers and ponds causing spread of water borne diseases like dysentery, cholera, diarrhoea and other intestinal disorder.

The affected people of the district have urged the authorities to take proper steps immediately for repairing the old and sinking new tubewells to meet the people's need for pure water.

The under-sized fish are being indiscriminately caught and sold throughout the district defying government ban.

The fishermen of Sadar, Amtali, Bamna, Betagi and Patharghata upazilas are catching under-sized fish from haors, beels, canals, rivers and ponds in large quantities and selling them in different village markets with impunity.

Many dishonest fishermen are also using current nets for

catching fish fry from open water, reserve fisheries and project ponds in several areas including Borguna town.

Local leaders have urged the authorities to take stringent action against the dishonest fishermen to save the fish population.

The Shishu Sadan in Sadar upazila of the district has been handicapped by acute fund shortage and inadequate trainers.

The Shishu Sadan providing vocational training has to be equipped with adequate tools and apparatus which are frequently required to be replaced.

Besides general education, the course includes first hand training in cottage industries, carpentry, dress making and tree plantation.

Tk 57 lakh contraband goods seized in 10 days

RAJSHAHI, Jan 5: BDR seized contraband goods worth about Taka 56,98,799 and arrested six people from the border areas of the district between December 18 and December 27, reports UNB.

The seized items include polyester cloths, sarees, salt, bicycle, onion, motor parts, utensils, appliances and cosmetics.

The goods were handed over to the local Customs Office and the accused were sent to the jail house.