

District roundup

SYLHET

'BDRCS to stand by needy people'

Dec 9: The Chairman of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), Syed Shahidul Haque Jamal MP, has said here that the BDRCS would always stand by the needy people to relieve them of their sufferings, report BSS.

People in distress may always rely on the BDRCS for assistance during their woes as a result of flood, cyclone and other natural calamities, he told a meeting of the executive committee of the district unit of the society recently.

The Chairman of the BDRCS also visited the Habiganj, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj units of the society and held discussions with members on the organisational matters. He also visited the Brahmanbaria district unit of the society, during the trip.

In all the units Syed Shahidul Haque Jamal emphasised on the humanitarian service of the society for the people in distress. He also asked them to gear up youth red crescent activities.

SHERPUR

Bus dacoity at Amtali

Dec 9: A bus dacoity was committed at Amtali on Sherpur-Jamalpur Road Saturday night, police here said, reports UNB.

The dacoits boarded the Sherpur bound bus in the guise of passengers at Ferry ghat and when the bus reached at Amtali, the dacoits attacked the passengers and looted valuables.

A case has been filed with the local police.

SYLHET

Tk 16 lakh for reconstruction of 3 roads

From Our Correspondent  
SYLHET, Dec 9: A total amount of Taka 16 lakh has been sanctioned by the government for the reconstruction of three roads in Biswanath thana during the current financial year.

It was disclosed in a meeting held at the Biswanath thana parishad with Moksudul Hossain MP in the chair. It is also informed in the meeting that works on these roads would be started soon.

Of the total amount, Taka five lakh would be spent for Biswanath-Jagannathpur Road, Taka six lakh for Biswanath-Rashidpur Road, and Taka five lakh for Rampasha-Bairagribazar Road.

The thana-level officials attended the meeting.

NETRAKONA

BNP extended meet held

Dec 9: An extended meeting of BNP Netrakona district unit was held recently at Public hall here with Whip of Treasury Bench in Jatiya Sangsad Advocate M A Karim in the chair, reports BSS.

The members of the district committee and presidents and secretaries of the ten thana committees and all the front organisations of BNP attended the meeting.

KUSHTIA

Lathikhela contest

Dec 9: A three-day long traditional lathikhela began at Kushtia Technical School ground here on Saturday, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Lathial Bahini organised the function. Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia Abul Khair inaugurated the function as chief guest. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Kazi Abu Sharif presided.

Among others, Monzurul Haq Chowdhury, General Secretary, Bangladesh Lathial Bahini spoke on the occasion.

RAJBARI

Victory Day programme

Dec 9: Elaborate programmes have been chalked out here to observe the Victory Day on December 16 with due solemnity, reports UNB.

The programmes were taken up at a recent meeting at Deputy Commissioner's conference room. Presided over by Deputy Commissioner Choudhury Golam Mawla, it was attended by district officials, local elite, teachers and journalists.

The programmes include offering lathas at the mazar of freedom fighters, placing wreaths at the Shaheed Minar at 12:01 am, hoisting of national flag at local stadium at 8 pm and holding march past by police, Ansar, VDP, rover scouts, BNCC and school and college students.

Sports for women at officer's club and for children at the stadium, display of documentary films, friendship football match, cultural function, discussion meeting and lighting will also be organised to mark the day.

MAULVIBAZAR

Diarrhoea kills nine

Dec 9: Diarrhoea claimed nine lives and attacked a thousand others in three unions of the district, reports UNB.

The victims were identified as Altaf Ullah (35), China Begum (22), Anwara of Vatgon village in Kanakpur union, Shely Begum (18), Mayna Begum (30) of Chitral village of Nazirabad union, Renu Begum (38), Ershad Miah (30) of Uthar village of the same union in Sadar thana and Arif (18) of Balishahara village of Monsur Nagar union in Rajnagar thana.

Another report says: The 5th death anniversary of former MP Md Elias was observed here recently in a befitting manner.

A discussion meeting was held at Maulvibazar government college premises under the auspices of Bangladesh Chhatra League (M-J).

Saidul Islam Suman presided over the meeting. Among others, Fazlur Rahman and Akbar Ahmed spoke on the occasion.

JAMALPUR

Ganja recovered

Dec 9: Police recovered one maund of ganja from Rayerchar village in Sadar thana Thursday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, police raided the area and recovered the ganja.

None was, however, arrested. A case was filed with the local police in this connection.

PABNA

Pilferage of fuel from rly locomotives

Dec 9: Pilferage of fuel oil from railway locomotives has been going on unabated in Ishurdi and Paksey railway sections of the district, reports UNB.

Everyday hundreds of litres of fuel oil are being lifted from the fuel tanks of the locomotives and sold to the pump operators.

This malpractice has intensified with the advent of the irri-boro season, knowledgeable sources said.

Some unscrupulous elements buy oil from the dishonest drivers at a low price and sell them to growers of irri-boro at a high rate, sources said.

Railway sheds, locosheds and lonely places between two stations are the centres of transaction, they said.

As a result, government is incurring a huge loss on this account. Local leaders have asked for immediate action by law enforcing agencies.

LALMONIRHAT

328 shallow tubewells to be installed

Dec 9: A scheme has been undertaken to install 328 shallow tubewells to ensure supply of pure water in five thanas of the district, reports UNB.

According to Public Health Engineering Department, 79 new tubewells will be installed and 249 checked up tubewells re-installed.

Of the total, 36 tubewells will be installed in Sadar, 85 in Admitnari, 51 in Kaliganj, 39 in Hatibandha and 38 in Patgram thanas, the sources added.

MAULVIBAZAR

One gets life-term for murder

Dec 9: A man of Kulaura town of the district has been awarded life-term and fined Taka 5,000, in default to suffer one year rigorous imprisonment more, reports UNB.

The prosecution story, in brief, was that accused Dulal Miah killed an employee of Rainbow Bread and Biscuit Factory of Kulaura town on April 30, 1990 following a previous enmity.

District and Sessions Judge Mahmud Hasan Siddiqui after examining the witnesses and records delivered the judgement last week.



SILTATION OF RIVERS: The bridge site on the river Gorai. It is difficult to believe that once steamers and launches used to ply below the bridge. During summer, pushcarts, rickshaws and other vehicles ply on the bed of the river.

Emergence of charlands threatens navigation

JAMALPUR, Dec 9: Rapid fall in the water levels of the major rivers in the northern districts and emergence of charlands have seriously affected the navigation of the country.

Innumerable chars have already been emerged at places in the Jamuna, Brahmaputra, Ganges, Ghena and Lohajang due to heavy siltation.

An official source informed that an additional sum of over Taka one lakh is required for maintaining navigability of vessels every day.

According to water board sources, water levels recorded in the Brahmaputra at Dewanganj and in the Jamuna at Jagannathganj ghat are lower than the requirement.

The WDB sources said that 15 feet layer of silt had been deposited in the Brahmaputra at Bahadurabad and 15 feet layer in the Jamuna at Jagannathganj ghat. It is thus clear that these rivers are no longer navigable at different points.

It is apprehended that in coming lean period ground and surface water levels will go down further seriously affecting the ecological balance and causing crisis in the availability of water for both drinking and irrigation purposes.

Now the water transport including ferries and launches plying between Jagannathganj-ghat-Serajganjghat, Bahadurabadghat-Teestamukhghat, Bahadurabad-Chilmari, Bahadurabad-Shanandahbari, and Balijuri-Shariakandi are to

From Our Correspondent

cover additional distance of three to four miles to reach destinations due to elevated beds at the rivers Jamuna, Ganges and Brahmaputra.

Besides, movement at water vessels through the narrow passage near Kufuler char, Fofuler char, three miles upstream from Bahadurabad is about to be abandoned.

No water transport measuring over seven feet draft plying on this route.

It is learnt that the BIWTA has undertaken plan for dredging of the rivers.

The Bahadurabad Ferry Terminal at Kulkundi has been shifted to about two miles downstream in Jamuna due to siltation. Dredging is necessary at some places along the 32km long Bahadurabadghat to Teestamukhghat route to keep it navigable although.

Chilmari route may be disrupted and ultimately the distribution of essential merchandise including fertilizer and fuel to the northern districts will be stopped.

Meanwhile, engine driven country boats have become the main riverine transport for carrying passengers and merchandise goods.

At present over one thousand boats have been plying on different routes of the district.

The journey by these country boats are very risky and accidents occur frequently. Dacoities are also being committed on these routes for which the passengers move with risk.

It is informed that the da-

coits on these routes use high powered engine boats.

It is learnt that the country boats have monopolised about 140 miles rivers routes.

Passengers and businessmen of Bahadurabad-Fulchari, Jagannathganj-Sirajganj, Madariganj-Shariakandi, Bahadurabad-Chilmari and Bahadurabad-Rajivpur routes widely use engine boats to cross the river at a cheaper rate.

Due to insufficient rainfall during this rainy season, water level failed to rise at requisite level.

Only 400 to 550 millimeter rain fall were recorded in the northern zone of the country this year which could not create any remarkable water flow, in the rivers. Such record of water level in the rivers was not found in recent times.

It can be mentioned here that our 600 charlands are still visible throughout 150 mile-long river routes which are hindering the movement of JMTA ferries and railway ferries.

A source of BWD informed that record number of shoals have been formed on the river beds.

Consequently navigation may be stopped totally during the ensuing season.

It can also be mentioned here that the large scale use of shallow tubewells engines in the country boats have been hampering the irrigation facilities in the northern districts.

Massive boro, wheat farming plan

KISHOREGANJ, Dec 9: A scheme has been taken up to bring 1,34,700 hectares of land under boro cultivation in 13 thanas of district during the current season, reports UNB.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, 1,26,700 hectares will be brought under High Yielding Variety including Pajjam and the rest 8,000 hectares under local variety.

Thanavise breakup is: Hossainpur—2,700 hectares, Sadar—4,900 hectares, Pakundia—4,450 hectares, Katiadi—8,810 hectares, Karimganj—8,000 hectares, Tarail—8,200 hectares, Itna—25,100 hectares, Mitamain—14,160 hectares, Nikli—14,410 hectares, Austagram—22,700 hectares, Bajitpur—9,720 hectares, Kulliarchar—5,800 hectares and Bhairab—5,750 hectares of land.

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation distributed seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and other agri-inputs among the growers for the implementation of the programme.

Bangladesh Krishi Bank and other commercial banks have already disbursed loans to make the plan a success.

A total of 3,46,555 metric tons of boro paddy are expected to be produced in the district during the current season, official sources said.

Besides, AED has arranged 140 demonstration plots for teaching modern methods of boro cultivation.

A massive programme has been taken up to bring 14,200 hectares of land under wheat cultivation in 13 thanas of the district during the current season.

According to district Agricultural Extension Department, 1,620 hectares will be brought under the programme in Hossainpur, 1,780 hectares in Sadar, 3,475 hectares in Pakundia, 2,260 hectares in Katiadi, 1,215 hectares in Karimganj, 525 hectares in Tarail, 120 hectares in Itna, 125 hectares in Mitamain, 300 hectares in Nikli, 150 hectares in Austagram, 1,130 hectares in Bajitpur, 800 hectares in Kulliarchar and 700 hectares in Bhairab thanas.

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation will supply seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and other necessary inputs to the farmers at fair prices for the successful implementation of the programme.

Meanwhile, a total of 1,36,000 kgs of HYV wheat seeds had already been sold among the farmers in the ar-

ea.

About 26,980 metric tons of wheat are expected to be produced during this season, sources added.

Besides, AED has arranged 70 demonstration plots to acquaint the growers with the modern methods of wheat cultivation.

Another report from Khagrachhari adds: Khagrachhari agriculture development committee has taken up a project to distribute agricultural inputs worth over Taka 10 lakh to the farmers of eight thanas in the district.

This was disclosed at a monthly meeting of the committee held on November 30 and chaired by Khagrachhari Hill District Council Chairman Samiran Dewan.

Convener of the committee Manindra Kishore Tripura told the meeting that arrangements had already been made to distribute 17 power-tillers to the deserving cultivators of different thanas of the district.

Construction of embankments and digging of canals were also include in the committee programme to facilitate irrigation, the convener said.

Tk 10 lakh agri inputs to be distributed

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SYLHET: The mechanised boats have been lying under open sky which were brought here for relief work during the last flood.

Across the country

The glory that was Gour

By H B Khan

KURIGRAM, Nov 9: The historical structures and monuments of the ancient city 'Gour' or 'Gouda', capital of Bengal many centuries and adorned with magnificent edifices, on the verge of ruin for want of protective and preservative measures. The buildings, that still proclaim their existence in the ruined city were constructed at least six centuries back during the reign of the Sultans in Bengal. Many magnificent mosques, palaces and tombs constructed by these rulers were destroyed by the devastating earthquake of 1897. Some of those that survived include Chhota Sona Masjid, Darsha Mosque, the Tomb of Shah Niamatullah, Dhanachak Mosque of Khanjan dighi, Chanchika Mosque, Thohekhane Kotwali Dargah etc.

All these ancient buildings are located at the extreme border areas of Shibganj thana under Nawabganj in greater Rajshahi, but the Boro Sona Masjid went into the territory of India during the partition of 1947.

It is gathered that a sub-divisional officer of Nawabganj tried his utmost to turn this area attractive to the tourists and got a Dakbungalow constructed for the convenience of the visitors. The archaeological department came forward

with plans to conserve these historical monuments but all these efforts were shelved due to unknown reasons.

The mazar of Hazrat Shah Niamatullah in the ancient city of Gour is now in a shambles. There has so far been no efforts to preserve the mazar.

Hazrat Shah Niamatullah was a soldier in the Mughal Army. On his resignation from the services with the Mughal Army, he devoted himself to preaching Islam. His mazar is situated near the Shah Suja palace, known as 'Tahakhan Palasu'. On the way to the mazar, there is another graveyard where Shah Shaheb Hezbatullah Khan, the Subedar of the then Bengal, was laid to rest.

The historical sites at 'Gour' are now in an utterly neglected state. The mazars and the palace are likely to collapse any time. The relics are yet to be taken over by the concerned authorities. Many valuable archaeological articles are already lost, while efforts for preservation of the historical sites are conspicuous by their absence. The communication between Rajshahi and the ancient city Gour via Nawabganj is in a very pitiable condition.

Two ancient mosques are already destroyed. These two mosques were situated on the northern side of Sona Masjid.

Another historical site 'Darul Madrasa' on three bighas of land was discovered at Gour in 1971. Till now there has been no effective move by the concerned authorities to preserve the site along with several others at Gour.

Sona Masjid, one of the main attractions of Gour—the then capital of Bangla, has lost its pomp and splendour for want of maintenance and care. The masjid enriched with archaeological beauty was constructed during the regime of 'Alauddin Hussain Shah (1443-1519).

Another historical mosque, the 'Three-domed Mosque' exists at Gour near the mazar of Hazrat Shah Niamatullah and in front of Shah Suja Palace.

The historical significance of the Sona Masjid has increased due to the presence of mazars of four martyrs of the Liberation War including a Bir-Shrestha.

There are many ponds adding scenic beauty to the place. It is gathered that many ponds have been occupied illegally by some influential persons. Knowledgeable circles think that if the government leases them after re-excavation, it can earn huge amount of revenue which can be spent for protecting these historical areas from being ruined.

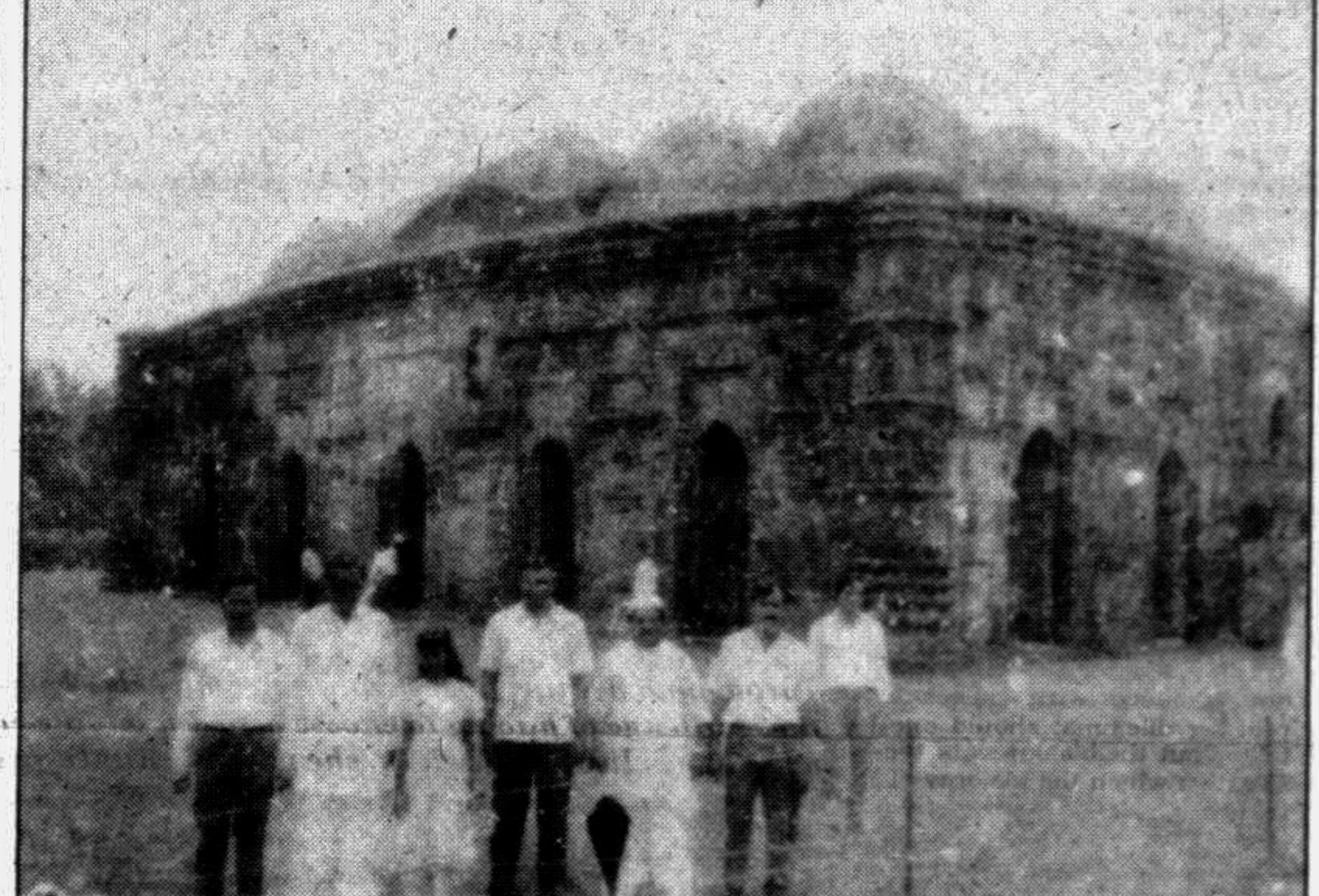
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KURIGRAM: The historical Sona Mosque constructed during the reign of Alauddin Hossain Shah is in a dilapidated condition.

Fuel crisis hits ferry services

MANIKGANJ, Dec 9: Ferry services between Aricha-Nagarbari and Aricha-Daulatdia are being hampered for the last few days due to acute scarcity of fuel, report UNB.

Official sources said irregular ferry services have been causing suffering to the passengers of the 36 south-western and northern districts.

It is alleged that the fuel distributing firms are supplying fuel to the private ferries illegally. Some dishonest employees of Bangladesh Water Transport Corporation are also allegedly involved with the irregular fuel supply.

Poura inhabitants for extending facilities

MAJDEE COURT (Noakhali), Dec 9: The inhabitants of the Noakhali Pourashava have been facing manifold problems due to lack of civic amenities, reports UNB.

Most of the roads of the town are in pitiable condition having no street light and footpath.

Markets are over-crowded and insanitary condition is causing difficulties to both buyers and sellers.

There is no public toilet in the town and people defecate by the side of the roads polluting the environment.

The water supply is inadequate and irregular. Traffic violation is rampant causing trouble to the transports and pedestrians.

Dwellers have urged the authorities to take immediate steps to solve the problems.

Food Department has started purchasing Aman paddy and rice through 11 purchasing centres in the district.

According to an official source, the target for the district has been fixed at 126 metric tons of paddy and 49 mts of rice.

The purchasing centres would give quality stock certificate to the growers, to be encashed from the nearest scheduled bank.

Two dacoities committed

CHUADANGA, Dec 9: Two separate dacoities were committed at two villages in Jibannagar thana of the district, police said today, reports UNB.

A gang of armed dacoits broke into the house of Fazar Ali at Anantapur village at midnight Saturday, tied up the house owner and the inmates and looted cash, ornaments and other goods worth about Taka 10,000.

A case has been filed with the local thana.

Another dacoity was committed at village Bazdia in the house of Solaiman Mollick where the dacoits looted Taka 15,000 on November 28.

The dacoits managed to flee and a case has been filed with the local thana.

Efforts needed to raise bamboo production

GAZIPUR, Dec 9: Production of bamboo has gone down as bamboo clumps in the district are being destroyed due to lack of proper orientation, maintenance and plantation, reports UNB.

Local people complained that no effort had been made to save these clumps in this area.

They said the roots which remain underground after cutting bamboo are uprooted to sell in the market as firewood preventing fresh growth of clusters.

Shortage of bamboo has shot up its price making it very hard for 80 per cent of poor villagers to repair their houses. Bamboo is now sold between Taka 70 and Taka 110 each.

The convicted persons are Arman, Sattar Mullah, Emanur Rahman, Shiraz Miah, Fazlu, Berek and Dulal. Among them Arman was tried in absentia.

BCL bags majority seats in polls

Awami League backed Chhatra League bagged 14 seats including the post of General Secretary at the students' union election of Meherpur Government College.

Bangladesh Chhatra Motri bagged four posts including that of Vice-President in the election held peacefully recently.

Zahangir Alam Biswas and Osman Sajjad were elected VP and OS respectively.

Construction of 11 pry schools complete

NARSINGDI, Dec 9: The Local Government Engineering Department has completed reconstruction of 11 primary schools in Sadar thana, reports UNB.

According to sources, an amount of Taka 30.11 lakh had been spent for nine schools and Taka 7.80 lakh for the two other primary schools under the third flood rehabilitation project.

At least 15,000 students of the thana will now get the opportunity of primary education.

Meanwhile, Narsingdi Thana Nirbahi Officer Firoze Salahuddin inaugurated the Abdullah Kandi Primary School on completion of its renovation work.

Another report adds: The engineering department has completed reconstruction work of eight bridges and culverts in sadar thana.

Official sources said, the work has been done at a cost of Taka 14.12 lakh financed partly by an NGO.

Abdus Samad Malik, Deputy Commissioner of Narsingdi, inaugurated the Dargakandi Bridge on December 1.