

**Constructive criticism acceptable**

MOULVIBAZAR, Jan 4: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman stressed the need for bringing about qualitative change in the opposition politics and said, the opposition could play positive role in the politics only through constructive criticism of the government, reports BSS.

The finance minister was addressing as the chief guest at a big public meeting at Kagabola union Moulvibazar district, Saturday.

He said, constructive criticism of the government, not criticism for the sake of mere criticism, is a criteria of the parliamentary democracy.

Dismissing the Awami League leader's allegation that there had been no progress in the country during the last two and a half years, the finance minister said, such irresponsible utterances not only exposed the political insincerity of the opposition leader but also hampered in image of the leader concerned, an official handout said.

Outlining various progress achieved by the present government including attaining of self-sufficiency in rice production, macro-economic stabilisation, growth in import and export trade; record amount of foreign exchange reserve, substantial increase in the internal revenue earnings, the finance minister said, such progress only brightened the image of the nation abroad.

He said, if there is any stagnancy in the investment market, the opposition could be held responsible for that.

**Racial violence in UK protested in Sylhet**

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 4: A Bangladeshi community leader from the United Kingdom expressed grave concern at the continuing racial violence there.

Afdel Asad, councillors of the Tower Hamlets Borough Council and Chairman of the Wapping Neighbourhood, was speaking at the local press club here today.

A Bangladeshi-born Asad gave a vivid description of the terrorist attack on Qudus Ali, a Bangladeshi college student in East London late last year, and consecutive attacks on the houses and commercial establishments of Bangladeshis there.

He alleged that neither the Bangladesh High Commission nor the government had protested these incidents.

Muktabs un-Noor, president of the Sylhet Press Club, presided over the meeting. It was addressed by Sirajuddin Ahmed, Professor Mohammad Shafiq, Aziz Ahmed Selim and others.

**Akbar visits coastal areas of Sandwip**

CHITTAGONG, Jan 4: Environment and Forest Minister Akbar Hossain today visited the coastal areas of Sandwip to see for himself the process of afforestation there, reports BSS.

Secretary of the ministry, director general of environment, forest conservator and officers of the Forest Department of Chittagong division accompanied the minister.

The minister was told that during the current fiscal year one thousand hectares of land will be brought under plantation. Afforestation of 65 kilometres coastal embankment and distribution of one lakh seedlings among the people are also in the programme. About Taka one crore will be needed for the project.

The minister expressed satisfaction at the forest of keora and bair tree in the coastal areas from Mirersarai to Chittagong.

**Kamal slates govt for campus violence**

MAULVIBAZAR, Jan 4: Gano Forum leader Dr Kamal Hossain today criticised the government for, what he called, the failure to address the people's problem and check terrorism in educational institutions, reports UNB.

"Rampant terrorism claiming 38 lives on the campus last year has crippled the education system," he said while addressing a public meeting in Maulvibazar High School ground here.

Dr Kamal pointed out that about two crore people are unemployed and 76 per cent people are illiterate. If this situation continues the goal of "education for all by the year 2000" will never be achieved, he said.

Criticising the legislators, he said, "Unfortunately, Parliament members can't reach a consensus regarding welfare of the people but all of them agreed on having tax-free cars."

**Priority to canal digging for boosting production**

RAJSHAHI, Jan 4: State Minister for Establishment Aminul Haque has said the present government has emphasised the canal digging programme for boosting production and reducing the losses of floods, reports BSS.

He was addressing the officials of district canal digging scheme, selection and scrutiny of election committee as the chief guest on Sunday.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Mirza Muraduzzaman MP, Kamruddin Muhammad Ehsa Khan Majlish MP, Akbar All Khan Ansari Ali Siddiqui MP, Shahidullah Khan MP, T M A Mannan MP and Sirajganj Poura Chairman Nur-e-Alam Helal.

The State Minister directed the concerned officials to re-select a canal digging project and survey the proper spot of the project within six days.

He urged all to perform their respective duties with sincerity, dedication and honesty with a view to resisting all sorts of corruption from the administration.

Five hundred seventy-five tons of wheat has been allocated for implementing the canal digging programme of

the district. Another report says: Construction of five new government primary school buildings at a cost of Taka one crore 25 lakh in Rajshahi city area will be completed by the end of the current month.

The Facilities Department of Primary Education Directorate is constructing the school buildings at Kazla, Laxmipur, Bhata Para, Talaimary, Atkoshi and Medical College campus of the city, said an official handout.

The department already constructed nine government primary school buildings in the city at a cost of Taka two crore 25 lakh during the last two and a half years. Each school is providing education to over 500 children.

Besides, one science building and one girls' hostel of Rajshahi College will be built at a cost of Taka one crore ten lakh and three boys' hostels of the same college will be renovated at a cost of Taka 30 lakh during the current fiscal year, it said.

The department has also undertaken a programme to develop seven non-government high schools and one private college at different thanas of

Rajshahi district at a cost of Taka 84 lakh in the current fiscal year.

The BNP nominated candidate for the post of Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu on Saturday visited different city areas and exchanged new year greetings with the people.

Minu visited Sopura, Raipara, Kathalbaria, Meherchandi, Uttarpara and Sargacha of the city and exchanged views with the people of the localities. He also met with the newspaper hawkers at railway station and enquired about their problems.

Awami League candidate Abdul Mattin Khan, Jamaat candidate Siddiqur Rahman and JSD, BSD, NAP and Workers Party supported independent candidate Siddiqur Rahman also visited different city areas and exchanged views with the people.

The members of 20 Rifle Battalion in a special drive seized Indian utensils worth Taka one lakh from Naohata Bazar under Paba thana of the district on Saturday.

Later, the seized contraband goods were deposited to Rajshahi customs office, an official handout said.



Advocate Hari Sadhan Deb Brahman, General Secretary, Bangladesh Betel Leaf Cultivators' Association speaking at a rally of the betel leaf growers at Baro Moheshkhali Natun Bazar on December 27.

**Betel leaf cultivation needs patronisation**

The agri-sector is lagging behind as the farmers are not getting the latest technology in the absence of coordination and agricultural policy, says a press release.

Advocate Hari Sadhan Deb Brahman, General Secretary, Bangladesh Betel Leaf Cultivators' Association, expressed the view at the rally of betel leaf growers held at Baro Maheshkhali Natun Bazar on December 27.

Hari Sadhan said that a handsome amount of foreign exchange is earned through betel leaf export but the sector has been facing manifold problems. He has demanded a policy for the sector.

He claimed that betel leaf is playing a vital role but this sector is not getting proper attention.

He mentioned that cultivation of betel leaf is decreasing for continuous natural calamities and absence of proper patronisation. There will be no betel leaf cultivation in future if this trend continues, he apprehended.

Anwar Pasha Chowdhury, Chairman, Bara Maheshkhali UP, said that betel leaf cultivators are not getting loan through there are rules to disburse loans.

The chairman demanded immediate loan and marketing facilities for the betel leaf cultivators.

Dilip Kumar Das expressed dissatisfaction for non-implementation of recommendations of the seminar held in 1992. He urged the government to materialise the forwardings.

Sirajul Islam, member, central committee, Rahmatullah Khan, Abdus Salam, Mohammad Hossain, Enamul Huq and Habibur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

**14000 ponds lying unused**

From Our Correspondents

SATKHIRA, Jan 4: About 14,000 ponds in different parts of Gopalganj and Satkhira districts have been lying unused due to lack of proper initiative from both private sector and the government sector for quite some time.

According to sources, about 75 per cent in Gopalganj and 50 per cent in Satkhira of the ponds either have been silted or dried up over the years due to negligence. A large number of these ponds also remain covered with waterhyacinth. An estimated of 16,000 metric tons of fish can be produced annually from these two districts once these ponds are used in proper way, say experts.

Initiatives in large scale like projects can restore proper functioning of these ponds. Re-excavation of these silted ponds can be used for fund aided projects for constant fishing schemes. Scientific fishing method is necessary for maximum output from these ponds, the experts further added.

Suggestions from local people say that short term loan to these pond owners can inspire them to go into commercial fish cultivation. This may result in competition of fish output among the owners throughout these two districts.

This, however, need initiatives from government or non-government bodies for patronisation, said one interested businessman.

**Work for welfare of mentally retarded**

Feni, Jan 4: A seminar under the auspices of Feni branch of the Society for the Care and Education of Mentally Retarded, Bangladesh (SCEMRB) held here recently called for greater participation of parents, social workers and philanthropists in the work welfare of the mentally retarded, says BSS.

Kamal, Hasan Choudhury, President of SCEMRB, Feni branch was the chair.

Inaugurating the seminar at the local Zahir Raihan Hall, President of SCEMRB D P Barua said, awareness has increased over the years through the efforts of the SCEMRB which with the partnership of NFFU - the Norwegian Association of Mentally Retarded and its financial support since 1982, has spent about Taka 12 crore for the welfare programmes and special education of the mentally retarded through its 24 branches. Barua mentioned about government support of Taka one crore 70 lakh for setting up of first ever National Institute for Mentally Retarded (NIMR) at Eskaton Garden, Dhaka for expanding service to the cause of this disadvantaged group of people. He said, the SCEMRB plans to establish at least 100 branches all over the country by 2000 AD to support programmes for the mentally retarded all over Bangladesh.

The Deputy Commissioner of Feni, Iftekar Ahmed, who was the chief guest extended support of the local administration for the programmes of the Feni Branches of the SCEMRB.

Karl Johan Haanes, NFFU Advisor of Asia based in Dhaka made strong plea for acceptance of the mentally retarded as equal citizens in the society and said, they are too capable of playing due role in the community once they are accepted.

Among others, Additional District Magistrate of Feni Nur Ahmed, a philanthropist Moazzem Hussain, SCEMRB, Acting Secretary General J I Mamun, National Executive member Shaif Majumder and Feni branch General Secretary, Advocate Samir Chandra in their speeches called for acceptance of the mentally retarded as part of the community with equal rights.

Government has sanctioned 1365 metric tons of wheat under the dry season test relief programme for implementing 570 uplift projects in five thanas of the district.

According to official sources, the projects included re-excavation of irrigation canals, construction and repair of roads, embankments and earthfilling work of religious and educational institutions.

Thana-wise break-up of the sanctioned wheat is as follows: sadar: 266 metric tons, Chhagalnaya 240 metric tons, Poshuram-345 metric tons, Sonagazi-201 metric tons, Daganbhuiyan-155 metric tons and Feni Municipality-78 metric tons.

The works on the projects are expected to be completed soon.

**District roundup**

C'NAWABGANJ

**'No alternative to nationalist politics'**

Jan 4: State Minister for Establishment Barrister Aminul Haq said there was no alternative to nationalist politics in the present perspective of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

He was addressing a public meeting as chief guest at local poura park organised in observance of 15th founding anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) here Saturday.

The state minister said, Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had introduced multiparty democracy, made the press free and saved the nation from the one-party rule of Awami League.

Haq said the democratically elected government of BNP was accountable for its every deeds. It was the responsibility of every citizen to play due role for consolidating democracy in the country and to take the nation to the road of prosperity, he added.

The meeting was addressed among others by Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Prof Shajahan Mia, Atzpur Rahman MP, BNP leaders Sultanul Haq Moni, Golam Jakaria and JCD leaders Harunur Rashid and Paria Ashraf.

Later, addressing a review meeting on the progress of primary and mass education programme in the district the state minister said, our socio-economic development would be retarded if we could not educate the masses. He called upon all concerned to put in their sincere efforts to ensure education for all by the year 2000.

CHANDPUR

**Bijoy mela concludes**

Jan 4: The 13-day-long, "Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela '93" was concluded here in a befitting manner, reports UNB.

The mela was formally inaugurated by Jejunessa Jafar, widow of late valiant Freedom Fighter Advocate Abu Jafar Mainuddin on Dec 8 by hoisting the Nation Flag in front of Angkar - a mausoleum of the martyrs of the Liberation War at the town in presence of a large number of people.

As many as 50 stalls were set up at the mela and earthen wares and toys of different types, ratha chakra, winter cakes and other items of traditional rural Bangla were the main attractions of the mela.

M A Wadud, convener of the mela and a valiant Freedom Fighter of Chandpur, Nurul Huda MP, S A Sultan Ahmad Tito, DC Golam Kibria and SP Abul Kashem Ferdous were present on the occasion.

M R Akhter Mukul, Major (Retd) Rafiqul Islam, Bir Uttam, artist Hasan Imam, Prof Panna Kaiser, Khaliquzzaman, Major (Retd) Syed Manibur Rahman, Brig (Retd) M A Matin, Bir Pratik, A B Siddique, S A Sultan Ahmad and Principal Ahad Chowdhury were present as chief guests on different days.

They urged the Freedom Fighters to forge a greater unity forgetting the party affiliations for the interest of the nation and called upon them to compile the true and correct history of the liberation of Chandpur so that the present generation can have a fair idea of the great Liberation War in 1971.

They also regretted that the many Freedom Fighters are passing miserable days in rural areas and some of them are seen begging to maintain their livelihood.

The discussion meetings were held on all the 13 days of the mela that followed by cultural functions. Many Freedom Fighters who took part in the discussion recalled their memories of the Liberation War.

NAOGAON

**29 labourers injured in road mishap**

Jan 4: At least 29 day labourers were injured, 16 seriously, on the 1st day of the new year, in a truck accident at Chakrail village in Badalgachhi thana, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the labourers were returning home to Shahzadpur thana of Sirajganj district by truck from Kamalbari village in Patnitola thana of Naogaon district after one month's stay for harvesting paddy at the village. They met the accident when their vehicle turned turtle and plunged into a canal.

Seriously injured ten labourers were admitted to Badalgachhi Thana Health Complex and other six to Naogaon Sadar Hospital. Of them, Sobhan (25), Chand Mia (30), Mukhdum Mia (35) and Manju Mia (30) were later shifted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. Their conditions were stated to be critical.

A case was registered with the police.

B'BARIA

**Road work in progress**

Jan 4: The construction work of the Kalikapur-Banchhampur-Marichakandi road under the Growth Centre Project of the Local Government Engineering Department is going on in full swing, says BSS.

Construction work of the major (three-fourths) portion of the 20-kilometre road has already been completed.

The earth work of the last five-kilometre segment of the road from Sonampur to Marichakandi was formally inaugurated by the local MP, Waile Ashraf at a function at Sonampur Bazar Monday.

Local officials, political leaders and the elite attended the function.

Brick works of about ten kilometres of the road has already been completed and construction work of one bridge out of the total four is nearing completion.

Three other bridges are also under construction. More than Taka one crore has been spent under the project.

BARISAL

**Massive plan to cultivate mustard crop**

Jan 4: A total of 64,785 hectares have been brought under mustard cultivation in eleven southern districts under Barisal Regional Agriculture Extension Department during the current rabi season, reports BSS.

The districts are, Barisal, Pirojpur, Jhalakati, Patuakhali, Barguna, Bhola, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Rajbari and Shariatpur.

The production target of mustard has been fixed at 30,000 metric tons this year.

Of the total, 24,940 hectares have been covered by upshil variety of mustard and 40,845 hectares by local variety.

Of the total, 4,000 hectares are located in Barisal district, 2,600 hectares in Pirojpur, 3,220 hectares in Jhalakati, 3,385 hectares in Patuakhali, 3,000 hectares in Barguna, 4,050 hectares in Bhola, 10,070 hectares in Faridpur, 10,400 hectares in Madaripur, 9,150 hectares in Gopalganj, 6,010 hectares in Rajbari and 8,900 hectares in Shariatpur districts.

The agriculture extension department set up 175 demonstration plots in these districts to educate the farmers of modern methods of cultivation, the source added.

JHENIDAH

**Oli claims success of BNP govt**

Jan 4: Communications Minister Oli Ahmed Sunday said that his party might have made mistakes but there is none to stigmatise them on charges of corruption or other mischiefs, says UNB.

The minister said many quarters were jealous about the success of the present government and trying to disrupt the development process in the country.

Addressing a public meeting at Chaprail Bazar the minister said, "We do not pursue the politics of hollow speeches only. We stick to the politics of deeds and truth."

He said, "mistakes might be there but there is none to stigmatise them on charges of corruption or other mischiefs."

He said, "BNP has introduced a new trend of honesty, discipline and public welfare in the politics of the country."

Earlier, Oli Ahmed addressed a rally at Shalakuipa Pilot High School premises on the occasion of 15th founding anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

NETRAKONA

**Seminar on diarrhoea prevention held**

Jan 4: A seminar on "Diarrhoea Prevention" was held at public hall here recently, says BSS.

Netrakona district health department organised the seminar in connection with the Diarrhoea Prevention Day-93.

Deputy Commissioner, Netrakona, Dewan Aferuddin attended the seminar as chief guest while Dr Latifur Rahman, Civil Surgeon, Netrakona was in the chair.

Among others, Sukumer Saha, Thana Health Administrator, Netrakona sadar, and Nur-e-Alam Siddiqui Coordinator of Diarrhoea Cell of Netrakona district, addressed the seminar.

Aferuddin in his speech urged the health officials to work with utmost sincerity and devotion to make the diarrhoea prevention programme a success.

**Tk 12cr contraband goods seized**

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Jan 4: The BDR personnel of 22 Rifles Battalion, Jessore, seized contraband goods worth Taka 12,12,40,000 and lodged 4,321 cases with to different thanas of the district during the year, 1993, said an authoritative source.

The BDR arrested a total of 584 people while they were illegally crossing the border and foiled BSF attempt to push in 1,435 Indian nationals during the period, according to the source.

It is learnt that goods worth Taka 11,00,41,875 were seized while coming to Bangladesh from India.

These goods included Indian cattle, saree, salt, sugar, hides, bicycles, cycle-parts,

machinery parts, medicine, fruits, fertilizer, crockeries, imitations and garment goods. Taka 1,11,98,913 were seized while smuggled out of the country.

These were: polyester, VCP, VCR, hilsha fish, spices, old garment, bearings, copper, brass.

The Commanding Officer, 22 Rifles Battalion, Jessore, Lt Col Reaz-ur-Rahman said that mobilisation of general people against smuggling was the only way to curb smuggling along the border. Mere deployment of troops will do no good for the nation, he added.

He urged upon all patriotic people to play their role properly in building up resistance to eradicate the evils perma-

nently.

It is also learned that a cattle corridor was set up at Navaran, Sharsha thana in the district for collection of taxes under arrangement of task forces to legalise the Indian cattle purchased from border for entry into Bangladesh.

The corridor will remain open from 9 am to 5 pm daily. Local MP Talibur Rahman Sarder and many others were present during opening of the corridor, it is learnt.

The T and T Minister Tariqul Islam inaugurated the commercial production of Jessore plastic industry at a simple function here Saturday.

The factory, set up at the estimated cost of Taka 2.76 crore,



SYLHET: Honorary Consul General of Bangladesh in Edinborough, Scotland, UK, Wali Tosoruddin (3rd from right) visiting the 100-bed Shishu Hospital, now under construction, of Lions Club of Sylhet recently. — Star photo

**131 schools under reconstruction**

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, Jan 4: The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has taken up two programmes to reconstruct and repair 62 government primary schools and 69 registered non-government primary schools in six thanas of Moulvi Bazar district.

It is learnt that under the General Education Project, Taka 89 lakh 70 thousand has been allocated for reconstruction of 31 government primary schools and Taka 16 lakh 49 thousand has been allocated for repair works of another 31 government primary schools. Work on these projects is expected to be completed by March 1994. Asian Development Bank (ADB) has provided fund for implementation of the projects.

Meanwhile, Taka two crore 89 lakh 90 thousand was sanctioned for reconstruction of 69 registered non-government primary schools under "Registered Non-Government Primary Schools Development Project". The government allocated the money for this project from its own fund. Work of the project is expected to be completed by next month.

Another reports says: Reconstruction work of 10 flood damaged roads are going on in full swing in five thanas of the district under the supervision of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED).

A local source of LGED said a total of Taka one crore 65 lakh has been sanctioned under Annual Development Programme (ADP) by NICAR for the scheme.

Out of the total schemes, six roads are being reconstructed in Moulvi Bazar sadar thana. The roads are: Ekatonaha-Akhalikura Road, Kucharna-bazar-Shamsergonj Road, Tarabazar-Tharabazar Road, Basudabri-Mathakhai Road, Tharabazar-Mathakhai Road and Kanakpur-Pudinapur Road.

Another scheme is being implemented in Rajnagar thana to reconstruct Rajnagar-Tarapassa-Kamarchak road.

**30,187 eye patients given free treatment**

A total of 30,187 patients of various remote villages of four districts under Sylhet region was treated by Moulvi Bazar branch of Bangladesh National Society for Blinds (BNSB) under mobile eye camp pro-

gramme during last eleven months.

The BNSB sources said, 3671 cataract patients were operated upon during the period. Of them 2838 were major operations. Spectacles were also distributed to the patients free of cost. The BNSB had set up 40 mobile eye camps in rural areas of Moulvi Bazar, Hobbigonj, Sylhet and Sunamgonj districts, under this programme.

The BNSB, Moulvi Bazar branch has been introducing the mobile eye treatment programme for poor patients of rural areas every year. They also set up a modern eye hospital at Moulvi Bazar town.

**Four arms, Tk 1 lakh looted from launch in Khulna**

KHULNA, JAN 4: Armed dacoits looted four arms and about Tk 1 lakh from a passenger launch in the river Shibsha in Koira thana Saturday night, reports UNB.

Police said a crew member of the MV Water King was injured with bullet as the robbers fired several shots and beat up passengers and staffers during the dacoity at about 10 pm.

Wahiduzzaman, 35, hit with a bullet on the back, was admitted to the 205 bed hospital here in a critical condition.

The bandits snatched three single-barrel guns and a 22-bore rifle from some local leaders returning home with the arms after renewing their licences from the Deputy Commissioner's office.