

Importance given to rural development

MUNSHIGANJ, Jan 8: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman on Thursday said, the present government had attached paramount importance to rural infrastructure development and redoubled funds for this sector as it is the lifeline and key to improvement of rural economy, reports UNB.

He was addressing as chief guest a meeting organised here. Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam also spoke on the occasion.

The Finance Minister said, a total of Taka 200 crore would be spent this year for development of rural roads and feeder-roads. This amount is four times the original allocation to this sector this year.

He said, in the recent Annual Development Programme (ADP) review meeting, a total of Taka 207 crore had been diverted from slow-going projects and a substantial portion of it would be spent in

the road construction sector. This increased amount will pace up the overall infrastructural development of the country, he said.

The Finance Minister said, the development allocations in the four city corporations of the country had also been increased substantially in the current fiscal year.

The total money spent in this sub-sector during the last three years has exceeded even the total allocations of the previous six years, he added.

Earlier, the Finance Minister laid the foundation stone of the 123 feet Mirkadam Bridge here. Undertaken by the Munshiganj Zilla Parishad, the bridge is expected to be completed within six months at a cost of Taka 18 lakh.

He also inaugurated the main building of the local Bashirunnessa Girls' High School on his arrival at Munshiganj.

Erosion of mighty Meghna renders 1000 families homeless

BARISAL, Jan 8: Erosion of the river Meghna and Tetulia has engulfed hundreds of acres of land and rendered at least 1,000 families homeless in five thanas of Bhola district, says a UNB report.

Erosion affected villagers are: Ilisha and Rajpur of sadar; Bhabanipur, Hazipur and Syedpur of Borhamuddin; Gangapur of Daulatkhan; Sachra and Gurida of Tajamuddin; Charkalchand, Dhaliourganar and Kamar Howla of Lalmoan thana.

Meanwhile, the homeless people have taken shelter on different embankments and are leading a miserable life there almost without any relief-goods. Local people alleged that no government or private organisations have extended any help to these helpless people. Moreover, these people have been suffering from various diseases due to malnutrition.

It is learnt that so far Taka eight crore was allocated to protect some areas of Bhola from continuous erosion of the mighty river Meghna but the project is yet to be started.

9,078 mt sugar produced in 67 days

From Our Correspondent
NATORE, Jan 8: North Bengal Sugar Mills has produced about 9,078 metric tons of sugar crushing 1,14,047 metric tons of sugar-cane in 67 days.

It is learnt that the sugar mills fixed its production target at 19,150 metric tons crushing 2,20,115 metric tons of cane by 142 days.

According to sources, the mill authority is facing problems to pay the prices of sugarcane as the produced sugar remains unsold. Only 828 metric tons of sugar have so far been sold.

The availability of Indian sugar at low prices is the cause of remaining local sugar unsold.

Home made sugar is available at local markets at Taka 26 to Taka 28. But Indian sugar is selling at Taka 23 to Taka 24.

On the other hand, 45 power crushers are running at the mills areas which produce molasses crushing about 18 thousand maunds of sugar-cane everyday.

As a result, the target of cane-crushing at the mills may not be achieved this season.

Owners using firewood in brickfields despite ban

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 8: Despite government ban, the use of firewood in the brickfields, is going on in the district.

It is gathered that felling of trees unabated to meet the requirements of the brickfields of Sirajganj district.

During current season, about 38 brickfields have been set up in different places of the district.

The main brickfields have been set up at Khidir, Chatantali and Bambaria under sadar thana and at different places in Ullapara, Rajganj and Kamarkhanda thanas.

In the area. Both, firewood and bamboo roots are openly burnt in the brickfields but it is alleged the concerned authority do not take steps to resist this illegal practice.

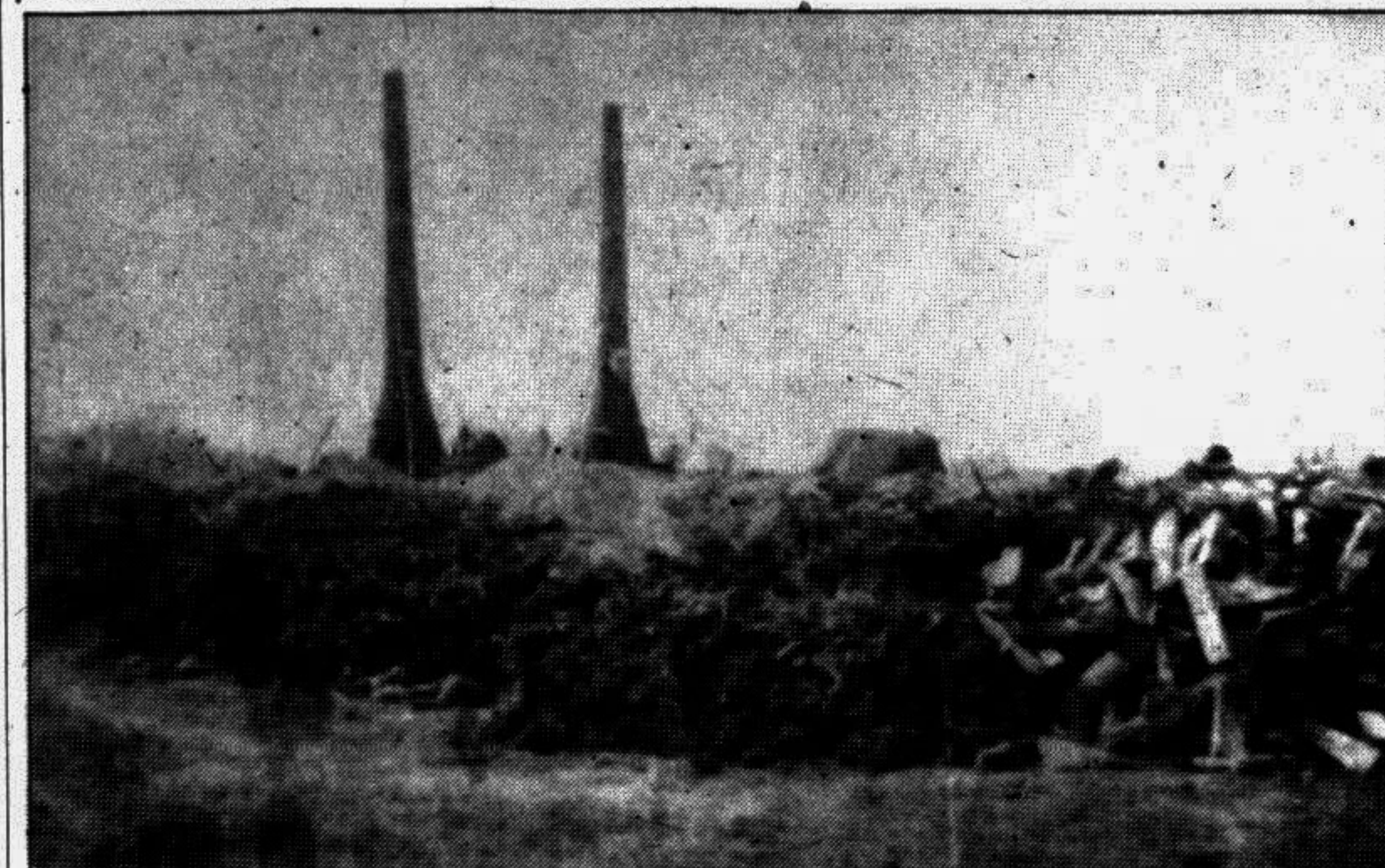
Bar assoc election

Election of Sirajganj district Bar Association was held at the bar office on December 31. Two panels, one led by Abu Monilana Abu Bakker Siddique and the other led by Advocate Abdul Jabbar Khan contested in the election.

local BRAC officials have told this correspondent that encouraging response has been shown, in the areas to set up more schools at Ullapara.

Our Madaripur Correspondent adds: The use of firewood in the brickfields of the district is going on unabated. Brickfield owners are using trees as fuel despite availability of coal in the depots, local people alleged.

Besides, bamboo roots are also being used as fuel for burning bricks in all 10 brickfields while age-old pine, mango and other fruit bearing



Despite a ban, brickfield owners continue to use firewood in their kilns. The authorities, for reasons best known to themselves, continue to look the other way. — Star photo

Despite government ban on huge fruit bearing trees and other trees are found at almost all the brickfields of Sirajganj district.

The brickfield owners prefer the use of fire wood as it is available on credit and at a considerable cheaper rates in comparison to coal. Coal can only be collected on cash payment. This phenomena leads to encourage the brickfield owners to use firewood as fuel.

Due to rampant use of firewood, huge trees are cut down almost everyday causing environmental hazards in the area. It is also reported that small trees do not escape the hands of the greedy firewood merchants.

Other then firewood, the bamboo roots are also widely used in the brickfields causing shortage of bamboo production

A total of 203 voters cast their votes. Advocates Abdul Jabbar Khan and Quamruzzaman Khokon were elected president and General Secretary respectively of the 17-member committee.

Motion picture workers' assoc formed

The Motion Picture Workers' Association was formed here recently with district SKOP leader Abdul Rahman in the chair. A 21-member executive committee was formed with Sonaulah Mia as President and Abdul Aziz as secretary.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) have set up 157 non-formal primary schools at Ullapara thana.

A total of 5181 students is getting educational facilities in the schools. While contacted,

trees are being cut down for reserves.

Date trees, on the other hand, are being chopped down indiscriminately to add to energy consumption in the brickfields affecting production of molasses, they also added.

Meanwhile, the environmentalists have expressed grave concern over the increasing felling of trees which is affecting the ecological balance in the district.

The government in July 1989 imposed ban on using firewood in brickfields to halt deforestation all over the country.

Local people urged the authorities to take proper action against the brickfield owners for violating government ban without further delay.

District roundup

BBARIA

Minor girl killed in road accident

Jan 8: A minor girl was killed in a road mishap near Bullaram bridge in sadar thana on Comilla-Sylhet highway on Saturday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said, the dead, identified as Runa (8) was killed when a Dhaka bound bus ran over her while she was crossing the road.

Police seized the bus but the driver managed to flee. The deceased was buried after autopsy in sadar hospital.

A case has been filed with the local police.

Another report says: Local Power Development Board has realised Taka one crore as electricity bills during the month of last December, official sources said.

The thanawise break up of realisation of money was as follows: Sadar — Taka 55.50 lakh, Akhaura — Taka 11 lakh, Nabinagar — Taka 10.30 lakh, Sarail — Taka 7.50 lakh and Ashuganj — Taka 15 lakh.

Besides, the board also disconnected 370 illegal electricity connections during the period.

NARSINGDI

Brother kills brother

Jan 8: A man was allegedly killed by his elder brother at Lakhomi village in Shibpur thana on Sunday, reports UNB.

Villagers said, following a quarrel the elder brother Mubarak Hossain hit his younger brother Delwar Hossain (40) with a bamboo stick on January 1. He succumbed to his injuries next morning.

While attempting to bury the deceased without postmortem, the villagers informed the police who sent the body to hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case had been filed.

PABNA

Procurement of aman paddy inaugurated

Jan 8: Aman procurement in nine thanas of the district began from Thursday, official sources said Friday, reports UNB.

MAK Azad, Officer-in-Charge of the local godown inaugurated the procurement programme at its premises in a simple ceremony. Local MP Mohammad Osman Gani Khan was also present on the occasion.

The function was addressed, among others, by Deputy Commissioner of the district, Asikul Haque Chowdhury, District Controller of Food, Sukumar Chandra Roy, Assistant District Controller Asik Elahi, Sadar Thana Food Officer, Abdul Mannan, and Pabna Rice Mills' Association President Idris Ali Biswas.

Officials said, a total of 10 tons of rice were procured on the first day while 25,000 metric tons are expected to be procured during the season.

RAJSHAHI

Tk one crore sanctioned for construction of Bhumi Bhaban

Jan 8: The Government has taken a programme to construct Bhumi Bhaban in Rajshahi at a cost of Taka one crore, reports UNB.

State Minister for Land Mohammad Kabir Hossain Thursday laid the foundation of the bhaban at the district collectorate building premises.

The government has already sanctioned Taka 35 lakh for the bhaban in the current fiscal year, said a PID hand out.

Later, the State Minister presided over a meeting of the selection committee of canal re-excavation in the district.

The meeting has taken decision to re-excavate three canals in the district during the current financial year. Four hundred metric tons of wheat have been allocated for the purpose.

A water regulator will also be constructed at Pabna thana at a cost of Taka 18.5 lakh.

GAIBANDHA

Valuables worth Tk 2 lakh gutted

Jan 8: Valuables worth about Taka two lakh of six families were burnt to ashes when a devastating fire broke out at village Haripur under Betkapa union in Palashbari thana recently, reports BSS.

The fire originating from a kitchen quickly engulfed the adjacent area and gutted twelve houses of six families.

On hearing the hue and cry, the villagers rushed to the spot. It took a long time to control the fire.

BAGERHAT

Education given priority to remove illiteracy

Jan 8: Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman Thursday said that the present government have created opportunities for all self-own of people for the spread of education to eradicate illiteracy from the country, reports BSS.

The foreign minister was addressing a public meeting at Pinguria Ebtadia Madrasha premises under Kachua police station.

Presided over by an eminent social worker Molla Fazlur Rahman, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Syeda Nargis Ali, MP and President of Bagerhat district BNP Barrister AT Monowar Uddin.

The foreign minister said that education was a must for national development and alleviating poverty. He also laid emphasis on religious education saying that it made mankind perfect.

Earlier, the foreign minister visited Pancha Dighi re-excavation project. He also formally laid the foundation stone of a new building of Bilkul Government Primary School.

COMILLA

Help continue pace of development

Jan 8: Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain called upon the nationalist forces to forge unity and help continue the pace of development and process of democracy, reports BSS.

"A vested quarter has been hatching conspiracy to foil the present trend of development and the process of democracy", Dr Mosharraf Hossain observed.

The Energy Minister was addressing a public meeting here Thursday. Chaired by the local UP Chairman Abdul Wadud, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Vice-President of Comilla district BNP Obaidul Hoq Bhuiyan, Convenor of district Juba Dal K M I Khalil, local BNP leaders Muhtul Islam Muhtul, Munshi Nasiruddin Nasir and local UP Chairman Humayun Kabir.

SAVAR

2 decoits held

Jan 8: Two persons were arrested here Friday for their alleged involvement in a robbery on the outskirts of the capital city, reports UNB.

Police said a gang of five men halted a rice-laden truck at Jorepur near Gabtoli, and forced its driver and his helper to take dhutura poison at gun-point on Tuesday afternoon. The miscreants also stabbed the two and fled with the truck leaving them unconscious near the PATC complex.

Driver Shafiqullah, 52, was admitted to the Orthopedics Hospital, and helper Anwar Hossain to the Savar Health Complex in critical condition.

They said the truck was carrying 152 bags of rice worth Taka one lakh from Bogra to Dhaka.

Police arrested Piroz, 28, of Mirganj thana in Patuakhali district and Aziz, 30, of Dhamrai in Dhaka from the Savar Bazar this morning.

PATUAKHALI

Seven injured in groups clash

Jan 8: Seven persons, including two women, were injured, six of them seriously, in a clash between two rival groups of people at village Durgapur under Patuakhali sadar thana recently, reports BSS.

The clash occurred when the rival groups were trying to harvest the paddy from a plot of land.

RAJBARI

Free text books for primary school students

Jan 8: Government will distribute 1.29 lakh sets of text books free of cost among the primary school students of the district under the compulsory free primary education programme, says UNB.

According to the officials, the distribution has begun on January 1 this year among the 263 government and 100 registered primary schools.

Of the total books, 38,200 will be distributed in class one, 32,400 in class two, 23,900 in class three, 18,900 in class four and 15,600 in class five.

Massive afforestation plan

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Jan 8: An ambitious programme to put 1,080 hectares of land in northern districts under intensive afforestation will be executed this year at the initiative of the Forest Department in collaboration with the district and thana level administration.

Under the programme, 700 hectares of land will be cultivated with tree plants wood and the rest of 380 hectares of land with fruit bearing plants.

The available spaces beside the railway implementation of lines, roads, embankments and barren lands will be utilised for the programme.

Meanwhile, the government has allocated over Taka four crore for the successful execution of the programme which includes nursing of tree plants, growing of saplings, establishment of nurseries and protective measures for the plants.

At least 15 shops and other commercial installations were

completely burnt into ashes at Shatibari Bandar recently. The loss of properties were estimated to be around Taka five lakh.

The fire originated from a lamp which spread into a petrol tank when a motorcycle was loaded with petrol with the help of a lamp-light.

During the mêlée, some gangs of miscreants looted away huge properties from the affected shops, it is gathered.

Housewife raped

A police constable, Ayub Ali, serving at Gangachara thana has been put under temporary suspension on charge of raping a newly wedded housewife, Kalpana Rani recently.

According to information, the accused forcibly entered the house who found the victim alone and raped her in mid-day which was witnessed by the neighbours.



NATORE: The vendors have set up shops on Nichabazar Road of the district town. — Star photo

Gas supply to Jamalpur, Sherpur HQs from Apr

JAMALPUR, Jan 8: The works to install gas lines in the greater Jamalpur district are going on in full swing, officials sources said, reports UNB.

The projects, 1.19 lakh feet long pipe line in Jamalpur poura area and 90,000 in Sherpur poura area, are expected to be completed by March of this year. Gas supply at the district headquarters will begin from April next.

The projects which went into operation on January 1 are being implemented at a cost of Taka 1 crore, officials said.

The Titas Gas has given connection to Jamuna Fertilizer Factory at Tarakandi in Sarishabari thana and the line has been extended to both Jamalpur and Sherpur district headquarters from the factory.

Another report says: Awami League leaders at a discussion meeting here on Tuesday urged all to follow the ideals of "Bangabandhu" Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to make the society free from all kinds of exploitation.

Addressing the discussion at the local Shaheed Minar on the occasion of the 46th founding anniversary of Bangladesh Chhatra League (M-I) they called for strengthening the movement to ensure trail of the killers of "Bangabandhu" family members.

Organised by BCL town unit the meeting was addressed, among others, by Mirza Azam MP, district Awami League President Advocate Motiur Rahman, Advocate Baki Billah, MA Jalil, Faruk Ahmed Chowdhury, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Narayan Chandra Paul, Rana and Nayed Rahman. BCL district unit President Tariq Malek presided.

The Awami League leaders at the meeting recalled the long-struggling tradition of Chhatra League in different national movements.

The anniversary was also observed in all thanas of the district holding seminars and cultural functions.

Tk 1.75 cr for construction of science buildings

BARISAL, Jan 8: Facilities Department of the Ministry of Education has undertaken four projects at a cost of Taka 1.75 crore in two southern districts, reports UNB.

According to official sources, the projects include construction of science buildings in four degree colleges of Barisal and Jhalakathi districts.

The four degree colleges are: Syed Hatem Ali College, Government Womens' College and Government College of Gournadi of Barisal district and Government Jhalakathi College.

Islamic Development Bank is providing financial assistance to these project, the sources added.

Another report says: The biggest delta district Bhola of Barisal division will be brought under National Electricity

Gridline Network by the month of March, this year, official sources said.

Now only 3.2 megawatt electricity is being supplied throughout the district against the requirement of 5.8 megawatt. There is only one Diesel Power Generation Plant with a capacity of 6.00 megawatt.

The government has been implementing a massive development programme to provide electricity facilities to the remote villages of the district for the development of the socio-economic condition of the rural people, the sources added.

A BSS report adds: A new daily newspaper The Daily Samar Barta took its debut from Barisal town on the new year's day.

Sarbahara men open fire on villagers, one killed, 2 hurt

KHULNA, Jan 8: A gang of the outlawed Sarbahara Party recently raided a village in Tala thana and opened fire on the villagers leaving a young man dead and two others injured, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Nazrul Islam (30) of Khanpur village. The injured Khalil (30) and Intaj Ali (40) were admitted to the Tala Health Complex in critical condition.

Police and witnesses said, he Sarbahara men opened fire after they were gheraoed by the villagers. The Sarbahara members raided the village at midnight to collect toll, villagers said.

A case was filed with the local police.

Govt taking no action against corrupt ministers : Nasim

CHITTAGONG, Jan 8: Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim on Thursday flayed the government for not taking any action against the ministers despite specific charges of corruption moved in Parliament, reports UNB.

"The Prime Minister could not take any steps against corrupt ministers as members of her family and relatives are steeped in corruption," he said in a scathing attack while addressing a rally at Lohagara thana on Thursday afternoon.

Because of the ruling party's indifference parliament is yet to pass many important bills, including separation of the Judiciary and Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) bills.

He said, different parliamentary standing committees were also stumbling on snags in functioning, and in many respects, "the speaker appears to be helpless."

Nasim, also Organizing Secretary of Awami League, said Prime Minister Begum Zia who formed her government with the support of Jamaat-E-Islami had failed to do good for the people in last two and half years. "Corruption, terrorism and politicisation mark the rule of

BNP," he alleged.

"The governing party is giving shelter to the corrupt and terrorists on the one hand and on the other Awami League members of parliament Aktaruzzaman Babu, Mostafizur Rahman and Hemayetullah Aurang are being harassed in false cases," he told the meeting.

Criticising wastage of crores of taka during the just concluded SAF games, Nasim said the government was squandering money on unproductive sectors at a time when country's mills and industries are being closed and workers terminated due to lack of money.

In a pointed reference to the open boozing in posh areas of Dhaka city in celebration of New Year on January 1, the AL leader said the BNP which secured people's vote in the name of religion and Islam remained silent spectator to the "shameless orgy" by a section of well of people in society.

Organised by South Chittagong district of Awami League, the meeting was also addressed by Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, Moslemuddin Ahmed, Shamsul Haq, Mohammad Idris, Motaul Islam Chowdhury, Sirajul Islam Chowdhury and Adv Humayun Kabir. It was presided over by Saifur Rahman Sowdagar, President of Lohagara thana Awami League.

Earlier, Nasim spoke at a gathering at Bandartilla in Chittagong city. Mayor candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury of Nagarik Chowdhury also spoke at the meeting, organised in observance of the first anniversary of Bandartilla incident in which over a dozen people were killed by a group of Navy personnel.



SYLHET: Sirajuddin Ahmed, Commissioner, District Rover Scouts speaking as chief guest at the concluding function of the 5-day divisional course for the scouts held here recently. — Star photo