

Demand to resume works on highway

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 17: The execution of the proposed Dhaka-Sylhet Highway via Aushkandi and Mirpur will reduce the distance between Sylhet and the capital by 55 kilometres from the existing road communication.

It was stated by the leaders of the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway Implementation Committee at a Press Conference held at a local hotel recently.

Kazi Kamal Ahmed, President of the organisation said that, the then government planned for the scheme to construct the proposed road in 1965. Some earthworks were also done following approval of the scheme. But, due to unknown reasons, the project

was suspended. Two years ago, the government considering the importance of the road link, started construction of a bridge over the river Bijn.

After completion of a considerable part of the road, works had again been stopped. The leaders of the organisation demanded for immediate completion of the bridge. They also demanded for taking early steps for completion of the whole project which would open a new era in the road communication of the greater Sylhet and Comilla region, they added.

The conference was also addressed by Maniruddin Chowdhury, Secretary of the organisation.



SYLHET: Professor Kazi Kamal Ahmed, President of the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway Implementation Committee speaking at a press conference held here recently. — Star photo

BNP govt fulfilling its election pledges: Anwar

COMILLA, Aug 17: Shipping Minister M K Anwar yesterday said, the BNP government is fulfilling its election pledges in phases by implementing comprehensive development programme throughout the country, reports BSS.

He was addressing a public meeting at Jagatpur Sadhana High School ground, a remote area under Daudkandi thana of the district.

The shipping minister said when the present democratically elected government is working hard for the total benefit of the masses, opposition parties are hatching conspiracy to go to power in the name of one-point movement. A caretaker government cannot be the substitute for a democratic government he said, adding that the issue of caretaker government is not at all the demand of the general

masses.

He said election is the only means to change the government in a democratic process. People has given their verdict to BNP to rule the country for five years, he asserted.

Strongly criticising the opposition parties, the shipping minister said, the people of the country will forget neither the one-party misrule of BAKSAL nor the autocratic rule of Jatiya Party. He called upon the people to be cautious about the heinous activities of the opposition and help cooperate the government to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

Organised by Jagatpur Union unit of BNP the meeting was addressed, among others, by BNP leaders Nurul Haq Bhuiyan, Abdul Rahman, Sirajul Islam, Dr Rawnak Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Khalilur Rahman and Abdul Aziz.

3,120 tonnes of wheat allotted for distressed women of Noakhali

MAJDEE COURT, Aug 17: A total of 3,120 metric tons of wheat have been allotted for VGD programme to provide food for distressed women of six thanas during 1994-96, reports UNB.

According to official sources, the two years programme will be implemented in 83 unions of six thanas of the district where each distressed woman will get 31.25 kg of wheat.

Jewellery shops looted in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Aug 17: Two jewellery shops in Barabazar were looted Sunday night by a group of dacoits, reports UNB.

Earlier, the armed dacoits numbering about 40 crashed the gate of Sonali Bank at the bazar at about midnight. They tied the hands and legs of the night guard of the bank but failed to break open its vault, police said.

A case has been registered with Kaliganj thana.

The programme has been started from July this year.

Meanwhile, 270 distressed women holding VGD cards have been deprived of the facility as no wheat was allotted in three pourashavas of the district during the time.

Another report from the district adds: A total of 527 metric tons of wheat have been allotted for test relief works under Food for Works Programme in six thanas and three pourashavas of the district during the current year.

Of the total amount of wheat, 112 metric tons were allotted for Sadar thana, 116 metric tons for Begumganj, 112 metric tons for Senbag, 48 metric tons for Chatkhill, 45 metric tons for Compagniganj and 73 metric tons for Hatiya.

In three pourashavas 10 metric tons have been allotted for Noakhali pourashava, 8 metric tons for Chaumohani and 3 metric tons for Basurhat pourashava.

The programme includes repair of bridges, culverts, earth work and plantation.

Govt attaches topmost priority to edn: Mosharraf

DAUDKANDI (Comilla), Aug 17: Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday said the present government had attached topmost priority to education sector to alleviate poverty and develop human resources, reports BSS.

"Education is the main tool to achieve the target of poverty alleviation and human resources development and overall socio-economic development of the country," the energy minister said while paying a visit to different educational institutions in the localities.

The minister was accompanied by the Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Jon J Scott. He briefed the Canadian envoy the method of teaching, infrastructural position and education policy of Bangladesh.

Lightning kills two

KUSHTIA, Aug 17: Lightning struck and killed two brothers and injured three other people at a remote village in Daulatpur thana last week, according to delayed message received Tuesday reports UNB.

The dead are: Seraj, 38 and Nasir, 27, sons of Khena Mondal of village Farakpur in the thana.

Outlining the plans and policies of the present government for freeing the country from the curse of illiteracy, Dr Mosharraf said we have started to launch some epoch-making programmes like food for education programme and free education for female students upto class ten. These programmes have been yielding positive results making tremendous change in education," he said.

The Canadian High Commissioner lauded the educational programmes of the government and assured all-out help to implement human resources programmes. He said Canada had so far provided two billion US dollars since 1971 for the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the highest recipient of Canadian aid which is being provided about 50 million US dollars every year.

The minister and the envoy also planted some saplings at the educational premises. The visit includes Daudkandi High School, Shahidnagar Primary School, Baropara Girls High School, Gouripur Subal Aftab High School, Daudkandi Primary School and Edgah Primary School.

Later, the minister attended mukjuddah naval commando conference at Gouripur and witnessed a football match

Agricultural development projects in Jamalpur face setback

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Aug 17: Agricultural development projects in various areas of the district have been facing setback.

It is learnt that the projects were taken to develop the agricultural sector, particularly in Jamalpur sadar, Islampur, Melandah, Madargang, Bakshiganj, Sarishabari and Dewanganj thanas.

About Taka seven crore was allocated for development works, including educational tours, agricultural exhibitions and trainings. Initially at least 100 demonstration plots were scheduled to be set up. Under the agricultural development projects in the district partial

knowledge and trainings to farmers, pest management control facility, proper use of fertilizers, irrigation, water supply and upgrading tree plantation, sugar production, beet leaf production, potato and other vegetables production would be provided in phases.

It is learnt that the farmers of this area are neither getting any facility in the seed sector from the appropriate authority to increase their agricultural output nor are they being patronised by supply of modern agricultural equipment. It is alleged that the commercial banks are harassing the farmers

in providing agricultural loans.

Livestock, poultry, dairy farms owners alleged that they have been also deprived of adequate help from the concerned authorities.

Farmers also expressed that implementation of various agricultural development projects will not be satisfactory due to alleged mismanagement, lack of coordination, want of good policy and plans.

According to the sources, some of the agricultural projects were taken up under the supervision of the Grameen Bank but due to absence of technical experts and consul-

ants some of the projects have failed. The programmes started on the commercial basis which include about 240 IRRI-boro projects which also failed eventually due to lack of proper care, initiative and modern farming methods.

Besides, natural calamities like flood, inadequate rainfall, drought, erosion, storms and use of adulterated pesticides on crops have also affected the overall production in agricultural sector. Due to the above reasons no scheme has been taken up in this season under agricultural development project.

PDB's alleged irregularities protested

JAMALPUR, Aug 17: A group of unemployed youngmen marched the street of the town on Monday to protest alleged irregularities in filling some vacancies in the Power Development Board, reports UNB.

They told the local journalist that PDB had invited application for filling 85 posts of helpers and accordingly they had called for interviews nearly one year ago. But the authorities delayed in giving the appointments.

The aggrieved applicants brought the charges of irregularities, saying that the selection for the appointment was being made according to the list of an influential PDB trade union.

About 20,000 applicants appeared in the oral tests for the post.

District roundup

PATUAKHALI

Erratic power supply

Aug 17: Erratic power supply in seven thanas including the district town for the last few months has been causing suffering to people particularly the HSC students, reports UNB.

Town dwellers alleged that electricity goes off every now and then plunging the entire town into darkness after the sunset.

As a result anti-social activities have been increased in the town in large scale.

Production in mills, factories have also been hampered seriously due to the frequent power failure.

Besides, students, particularly the examinees of ongoing HSC examination are the worst sufferers of the situation.

Moreover, household electronic appliances have been damaged due to voltage fluctuation.

Local people have urged the authorities to look into the matter and take necessary steps in this regard.

BARISAL

Programme to distribute 75,000 saplings

Aug 17: Bangladesh Agriculture Extension Department, Barisal region, has taken up a programme to distribute 75,000 saplings of different

timber and fruit-bearing trees among 18,700 members of poor and marginal farmers during the current season, reports BSS.

The programme will cover the districts of Barisal, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalakati, Bhola and Gopalganj.

According to an official source, government has sanctioned Tk. 7.50 lakh for the implementation of this programme in this tree plantation season.

The saplings to be distributed are coconut, jackfruit, kazi guava, mehani and raintree, the source said.

Besides, four lakh saplings of different varieties of trees have been produced in 16 nurseries of these districts.

The plants are being distributed among the farmers at a small cost.

FARIDPUR

Training course concludes

Aug 17: The second two day training course on Socio-Economic Aspect for the Executive and Thana Engineers concluded here recently, reports UNB.

Twentyone Executive and Thana Engineers of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) of greater Faridpur region and Kurigram district participated in the training course organised by the LGED.

Project Director, Rural Development Project-4, LGED, A. Taher Khan gave the concluding speech. He called upon the trainee engineers to apply the knowledge gathered from the training in implementing the socio-economic development programmes of the government, specially for the rural people.

A total of 47 Executive and Thana Engineers under LGED of greater Faridpur area and Kurigram district were inducted training on socio-economic aspects in two batches so far.

KUSHTIA

One killed in road mishap

Aug 17: An old man was run over by a truck at Lahini Botola on the Damdama Road, one mile from here recently police said, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Aziz Shah (60), a bicycle rider. Aziz died on the spot when a speeding truck hit him from behind in the afternoon. However, police seized the truck, and arrested the driver and the helper.

RANGPUR

Eight die of malaria in last 15 days

Aug 17: Eight people died of Malaria in last 15 days at village Kalachhari in Charnarayanpur union under Kurigram district, officials sources here said, reports UNB.

The deceased are: Shahidul (15), Jainal Abedin (16), Shahera (11), Butu Bibi (63), Movion Bibi (46), Malla Shukh (60), Rahima (55) and Haseeb Ali (30).

Civil Surgeon of the district has confirmed the deaths and said that medical teams have been sent to the affected areas.

NETRAKONA

Pourashava budget okayed

Aug 17: A revenue budget of Taka four crore and fourteen lakh was approved for Netrakona Pourashava for the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to pourashava sources, the budget was approved in a meeting held with the Pourashava Chairman Matiar Rahman in the chair.

Of the total budget, Taka two crore would be utilised for execution of different development oriented programmes, the sources said.

SATKHIRA

Indian pistol recovered, two arrested

Aug 17: The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel recovered one Indian pistol and arrested two people, including a woman in this connection Saturday, reports UNB.

The arrested are: Khokon Ojah of Kamargati village under Dighalia thana and one Usha Rani of Kola village under Terokhada thana of Khulna district.

According to police, BDR jawns of Satkhira headquarters challenged Khokon and Usha when they were going to Khulna by a bus, found an Indian pistol inside a bag possessed by them and handed them over to Satkhira police.

A case was lodged with Satkhira police.

SIRAJGANJ

50 injured in rival groups clash

Aug 17: Some 50 people were injured, four seriously, in a clash between two rival groups* of people at Ramakanthapur village in Tarash thana following a dispute over an arable land Sunday, reports UNB.

Police said the clash between the rival groups erupted when the supporters of Rahim Box attacked Sukur Ali while he was ploughing in the disputed land in the village.

Of the injured, four were admitted to Tarash Health Complex. A case was filed with Tarash thana.

MAGURA

Fisheries Fortnight opens

Aug 17: Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Major General (ret'd) M Majedul Huq formally inaugurated the "fisheries fortnight" of Magura and Narail districts by releasing fish fry in the Magura High School and Narail Sadar Hospital ponds, reports BSS.

The minister also addressed two separate rallies one at Magura and the other at Narail to motivate the people. He said the present government was attaching importance to fish cultivation for generating employment opportunities and meeting protein needs of the rural masses.

The minister stressed the need for expansion of fish cultivation in all available water bodies. In this context, he referred to the development programmes undertaken by the present government.

MAJDEE

Tree plantation fair opens

Aug 17: State Minister for Textile Abdul Mannan inaugurated a three-day tree plantation fair as a part of the country-wide tree plantation drive-94 organised by Noakhali district administration and the district forest department at Noakhali Court Building premises, reports BSS.

Speaking on the occasion, the state minister described how trees played a significant role in the national economy side by side maintaining the ecological balance.

He called upon the people to plant at least two saplings at their house premises to make the national tree plantation programme a success. A total of 30 stalls took part in the fair.

This year, a total 14 lakh sapling will be planted in the Noakhali district out of which 7 lakh have already been planted by the government and private institutions, an official handout said.

The function was addressed, among others, by Barkatullah Bhulu MP, Sahajuddin Kamran MP and Md Shajahan MP.



GAIBANDHA: Zinc Oxy-sulphate fertilizer imported from the United States of America in 1993 was distributed at the BADC godown for distribution among the local farmers. After about 10 months it was detected that the fertilizer contained high radio activity. Soon, the BADC office in the district, was ordered to re-collect the fertilizer bags given to the farmers earlier. Meanwhile, some of the fertilizer bags were, however, used. The remaining fertilizer bags stored in the godown as stock were returned. The photo shows a truck being loaded with the bags of the fertilizer for shipment to the port city of Chittagong. — Star photo

Significant progress in development works in Gopalganj district

By Naimul Haq back from Gopalganj

Aug 17: There have been significant progress in development works in Gopalganj district over the past three years.

The development works were specially visible in the highway road approaches to and from Gopalganj district. The Takerhat-Gopalganj road, about 14 feet wide, 74 kilometre long, now facilitates movement of more traffic than every before.

The road-come-embankment along the river Madhumati could hardly accommodate two-way traffic before it was widened and metalled only a few years ago. Traffic movement was quite dangerous as there was little room for two medium size vehicles to pass through. The construction of the Takerhat bridge was a major step forward for road communication in the district.

Before completion of construction of the bridge traffic movement was small and disrupted due to ferry crossing. Now that the road and the bridge have been completed traffic network through the district has increased to a great extent. "Traffic movement through the road has increased by about 40 per cent," says a bus driver. The road also became an important highway link for cargo carriers, specially those destined for Khulna, Bagerhat and Jessore from the capital and

Faridpur. Trucks carrying jute for mostly Khulna jute mills will start using the route this season as most of the quality jute from Faridpur and Madaripur are being readied for transportation," said a truck driver heading for Khulna.

This road has dual purposes as it serves as flood protection embankment and of course, as a road. A vast area of crop land is said to be protected from Madhumati river flooding every year since it was built.

A number of, about seven, sluice gates have been constructed on the road to control flow of water for irrigation during dry seasons. The road has been well covered by row of trees on both sides strengthening the foundation and preventing formation of any breaches.

The other major road from Gopalganj to the southern districts of Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira and Jessore also shares similar appreciation. The well built road can also lead one to Tungipara, home of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This road has been specially used for short distance journeys to Khulna and Bagerhat. Parjatak, a passenger service coach has been operating Dhaka-Khulna passenger services through Gopalganj using the road. Many other local transportation have been set up for passenger services to and from Gopalganj.

The roads in the town are

however, are in poor shape except few. There have been no major road development works in the town area. The roads in Bankpara are worse. A road, next to the only stadium, has remained broken for quite some time, disrupting plying of rickshaws and rickshaw vans. Roads in the bazar area are also in poor shape. The roads become narrower allowing fewer traffic for movement.

The district zila parishad, in the meantime, has undertaken development projects worth about Taka 1.42 crore for overall development of the town. This also includes road improvement plan, as well as, road construction projects.

During the past three years, a number of office buildings and staff quarters were constructed. The Public Works Department (PWD) office building is one of them. A new court building is being added to the existing ones to ease the rush of works. The deputy commissioner has a new two storied resident building facing the Madhumati river. The police line has been planned to be shifted to its new location just on the outskirts of the main town. Two new four storied buildings already stand there which can accommodate more than 350 police men.

Development in other sectors specially, in fisheries projects were significantly no-

ticed. Both, private and public initiatives have remarkably achieved successful results. The Panther Fish Project, a private initiative on more than 140 acres of land is one such example. Few more small fish projects have been set up in the district which also camp up with encouraging results.

The overall business in the district has sharply improved with the development in road communication network. "We now trade goods from Khulna," said one businessman. "Few years back we used to bring things from the capital which was quite a time consuming process," he added, saying, "I have more goods on my shelves to sell."

The electricity supply in the town needs a lot of improvement, no doubt about it. Power supply is very often disrupted, affecting production in the mills. Power supply remained snapped for more than 11 hours in the town recently "No work, no pay. This is how I earn my bread," said one worker who serves at a rice mill. "I only hope that electricity supply continues throughout the day but its hopeless these days," he says.

The entire town area after sunset goes into darkness, only the kerosine lamps glitter. The street lights in the town would have been set up by now but due to poor power supply its probably still on the pourashava's town development list.