

Taka 25.94 cr education uplift plans being implemented in greater Sylhet

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Sept 17: Development projects of non-government high schools and colleges are being implemented in four districts of greater Sylhet region, involving about a total amount of Taka 25.94 crore.

When contacted, an official source informed this correspondent that, under the project — styled as 'Development of Non-Government High Schools and Madrasahs' — works on 34 schools are going on in full swing in the region. An amount of seven lakh had been sanctioned for each of these schools, the source added. Of the total, 11 are in Sylhet, 12 in Sunamganj, six in Moulvibazar and the rest five are in Habiganj district. The scheme for construction of new buildings in these schools was taken in the fiscal 1992-93. It is expected to be completed by the end of the year, the source said.

Another 176 schools had been selected for development in the financial year 1993-94, involving an amount of Taka eight lakh for each of the school. The total amount expected to be spent in the project would be about Taka 14.08 crore. Of the total, 33 schools are in Habiganj, 56 in Sylhet,

49 in Sunamganj and the rest 38 are in Moulvibazar district, the source said. Under the project, new academic buildings would be constructed in these schools. Works on a number of schools had already begun while the others would begin soon, the source added. The project is financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Works on seven colleges under the project are in progress. A total amount of Taka 1.75 crore had been earmarked for the project by the Government. Taka 25 lakh would be spent for each of the institutions. These are Mainuddin Mohila College in Sylhet town, Tajpur College in Balaganj thana and Fenchuganj College of Sylhet district, Sunamganj Mohila College, Baniachang Jonab Ali College in Habiganj district and Komolganj Gano Mohavidyalaya and Barlekha College in Moulvibazar district. A two-storied academic-cum-science building is being constructed in each of these institutions.

Works on the schemes are expected to be completed by December this year, the source added.

The ADB would finance an-

other 'Development of the thana-level Non-Government Intermediate colleges project. Four institutions have been selected for the project. These are Jagannathpur College in Sunamganj, Jaintapur College and Biswanath College in Sylhet and Shahjalal College of Habiganj district. Taka 40 lakh would be spent for the construction of one three-storied building in each of these colleges, the source said.

Under another project styled as '15 University Colleges Development project', two buildings were constructed in the MC University College during the last financial year. The three-storied science building had been constructed at a cost of Taka 95 lakh while the girls' hostel had been constructed at a cost of Taka 48 lakh in the college.

From the revenue budget of the government, four schemes were implemented in the Sylhet Government Mohila College during the last financial year, at a total cost of Taka 1.35 crore. The schemes include, a three-storied academic building, science building, girls' hostel, and construction of boundary wall.

Construction of three science buildings had been

completed in three Government colleges under another project styled as '80 Government Degree Colleges Science Education Development programme'. Taka 52 lakh had been spent for each of these institutions, Beanibazar Government College of Sylhet, Srimangal Government College in Moulvibazar, and Chunarughat Government College in Habiganj district. Under the same project, works on the Moulvibazar Government College and Sunamganj College have been going on and expected to be completed soon.

Under the '64 Non-Government Degree College Development programme' financed by the Government works in four colleges had been completed with a cost of Taka 52 lakh for each of the institutions. These are, Madan Mohan College in Sylhet town, Chihatak College in Sunamganj, Kulaura College in Moulvibazar and Syed Sayeed Uddin College in Madhabpur thana of Habiganj District, the source said.

All these projects were implemented by the Facilities Department under Ministry of Education.

20 per cent handloom factories shut down in Sirajganj district

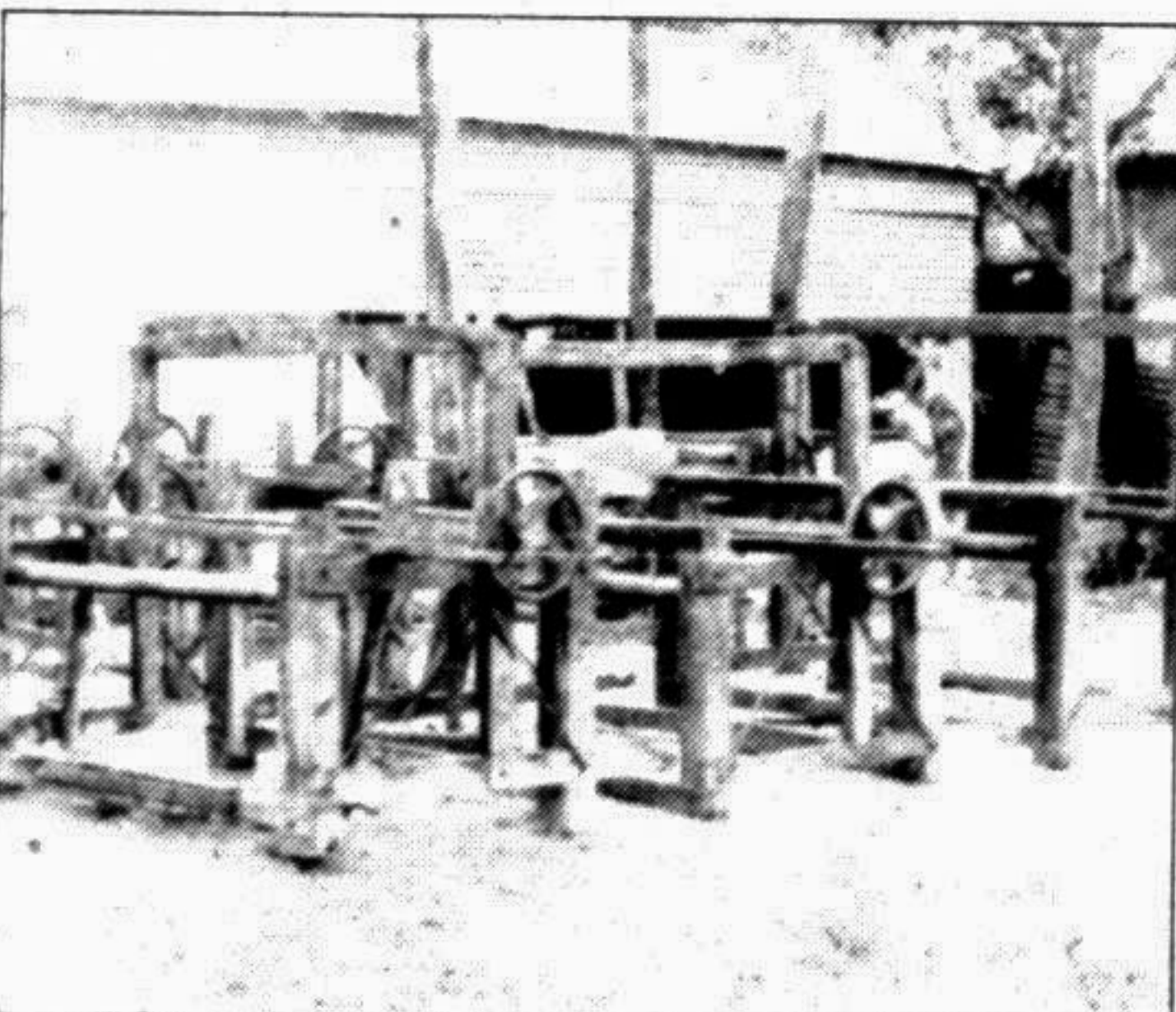
From Ashit Chowdhury

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 17: Handloom oriented cottage industry, one of the biggest in Sirajganj district, faces setback. High price of inputs and fall of demand in local markets have seriously affected production from the region. Meanwhile, about 20 per cent of the handloom factories have been closed down raising unemployment to about one lakh people who depend directly or indirectly on this profession.

The handlooms have been well-established in Belkuchi, Chowhali, Shahzadpur and Sirajganj sadar thanas which stand prospective. The district meets about 30 per cent of the total requirement of clothes in the country. There are 30,000 handlooms in Belkuchi, 20,000 in Chowhali, 35,000 in Shahzadpur, 15,000 in Ullapara and 10,000 handlooms in Sirajganj sadar thanas. The machinery used by factory owners include semi-automatic looms, traditional country looms popularly known as 'khatkhat' and newly added pit looms. More than five lakh people are employed in this sector. Probably the best quality cotton and synthetic sarees including 'zamandi', lungi, bedsheets, towel and grey clothes for printing purposes are produced in the handlooms of the district which are marketed all over the country. The cloth merchants from other districts come to Shohagpur, Enayetpur, Shahzadpur, Ullapara and Sirajganj once every week to purchase handloom products.

Following frequent occurrences of natural calamities like erosion and floods and price hike of inputs including cotton yarn, dyes, chemicals and onrush of smuggled clothes, about 20 per cent of the handlooms in Sirajganj district alone have been closed down.

It was also learnt from some weavers and traders that prices of cotton yarn have marked a sharp rise in last 10 years. Even within the last fortnight, price of one bale of cotton yarn has been increased to between Taka 1000 and 1500. Cotton yarn of varied counts from 20/1 to 120/1 are used in producing clothes. The synthetic cotton yarn is used to produce half-silk, full silk and zamandi sarees. 'Prestige', 'Tulip' and other types of lungis are also produced in



SIRAJGANJ: A handloom factory in Belkuchi thana closed down recently. — Star photo

from every yard of cloth.

The private entrepreneurs of handloom industries can no longer cope with the price hike of raw materials which obviously costs more for production. A smuggled Indian saree is available at Tk 150 whereas a locally produced saree costs at least Tk 200 in the open market. While visiting some of the handloom oriented cottage industry, the correspondent heard the owners express frustration. Alhaj Riaz Uddin Mollah of village Mukundagati, Abdul Kader, Nazrul Islam, Alhaj Mafiz Uddin Khan of Sernagar, Bangshi Badan Saha and Biswanath Roy of Chandangati, Nazmul Hossain Sheikh and Abdus Salam Sheikh of Gopalpur in Belkuchi, Haji Abdul Mazid of Betil, Haji Lal Mia and Shahzahan Ali of

Goprekhi in Chowhali, Sorwar Ali and Nazim Uddin of Shahzadpur, all of whom in handloom business, showed dissatisfaction. The grey clothes of Shahi print sarees are produced in the factory of Alhaj Mohammad Ali of village Mukundagati in Belkuchi thana. The owners of the weaving factories emphasised on supplying cotton yarn, dyes and chemicals to the genuine businessmen at fair prices. They said that many of the schemes initiated earlier by the government reportedly included 'fake' weavers. The then government in 1973 ex-

tended direct import facilities and allotment of cotton yarn from local mills for the weavers. The weavers, however, did not get any benefit and a section of vested quarters took advantage of the schemes. During 1975 to 1981, the same facilities were extended for the weavers. Unfortunately, the facilities were enjoyed by a quarter not connected with the profession. The deposed government of H M Ershad took up a scheme to distribute loan of Tk 5,500 per semi-automatic loom and Tk 3,500 per country loom. The scheme also could not be properly utilised as a major portion of handloom loans was grabbed by fake weavers through fake pass books of the Bangladesh Handloom Board. When contacted, the sources of loan disbursing scheduled

banks told this correspondent that recovery rate of loans was not satisfactory and crores of public money including principal loan amount and interests is still lying unrealised. Even the banks fail to trace out some of the loanees as they have no establishments at all. The available defaulting loanees, when contacted, said that they could not repay any instalment of loans due to loss incurred by them for the floods of 1987, 1988 and 1990. Later, due to fall in demand of the handloom products, the loan could not be repaid. The genuine weavers have appealed to the present government to exempt interests on handloom loans which have become a burden for them due to compound interest rate. They also called upon the authority to resume the scheme of loan disbursement. According to the weavers, Bangladesh Handloom Board should issue pass books against security.

To ensure technical assistance to the weavers, the government has set up two Textile Services and Facilities Centres (TSFC), one at Shahzadpur and the other at Belkuchi. The TSFC at Shahzadpur is operating since 1980. But the newly constructed TSFC at Sernagar in Belkuchi built at a cost of Taka 4.85 crore in 1992 could not go into production. The installed machinery worth about Tk 94 lakh include cotton yarn processing unit, printing unit and handloom goods. Local weavers have demanded to instal cloth processing plant at Belkuchi SFC of Bangladesh Handloom Board. The State Minister for Textiles, Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan, in 1992, assured that cloth marching and other machinery of cloth processing will be installed at Belkuchi SFC to meet the local technical requirements but the commitment has not been fulfilled yet. The project is hanging in balance without any output.

The Power Development Board (PDB) has set up a 250-KVA transformer at the project site. A source of the project said that the PDB has fixed minimum electricity bills for the project at Tk 16,000 per month which is abnormally high in comparison with the projects of same capacity at Tangail and Kumarkhali. The projects of Tangail and Kumarkhali pay bills on meter readings. One Assistant General Manager and three guards at Belkuchi SFC and one Liaison Officer and one guard at Sirajganj Basic Centre of Bangladesh Handloom Board are sitting idle without any work.

The prospective handloom oriented cottage industry of Sirajganj district may be able to contribute more in producing clothes if proper and planned attention is paid to this sector. Shahidullah Khan, MP of Sirajganj-5 constituency and Convenor of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Tanti Dal also said that the present government is sincere to encourage the handloom industry. The weavers have called upon the authority to resume loan payment scheme and ensure supply of cotton yarn, dyes and chemicals directly to the genuine weavers at fair price to save the prospective and traditional handloom industry.

Notes From Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Sept 17: A person committed suicide and after three days his wife followed him by taking pesticide. This happened at Jiral village of the district.

Aynal, 25, a rickshaw van puller committed suicide on September 12 as his wife was frustrated from having an affair, family sources said. Aynal's neighbours reacted to the morning on witnessing the corpse neighbours incident and started insulting and torturing Durall, Aynal's wife. She took her life as "she could not take it any more", neighbours said. She was expecting.

A case was registered with Gobindaganj thana.

Dacoity

A daring dacoity, in guise of police, was committed at the house of one Mortuza Chowdhury adjacent to Gobindaganj police station on September 12.

According to police a gang of four armed men in disguise of policemen raided the said house and took away goods and valuables worth about Tk 12,000.

Uplift programme

Local Government and Department has undertaken an uplift programme for the development of communication in the district. A total of Tk 3.05 cr has been allocated for the construction of six bridges in different areas of the district. One bridge across the river Bangali on Shaghata — Jumarbari road. Two bridges over river Ghagot on Naldanga-Sadullapur road.

Six arrested on various charges

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 17: Gournadi thana police arrested six persons on various charges recently. Of them, five were wanted.

The arrested are Nazrul, Malek Sarder, Idris, Manik Sarder, Rashid, and Jhulu.

They were arrested from different places of Batajore, Kashemabad and Mahlora of Gournadi thana, police said.

Police also said there are more than one case against each of them. They were absconding for months.

Continuous boycott of parliament condemned

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Sept 17: Speakers at a public meeting strongly condemned the continuous boycott of parliament and "conspiracy" against the democracy by the opposition.

The Sylhet district unit of BNP organised the meeting with M A Haque in the chair. The speakers said, the mainstream opposition Awami League was now out to create a lawless situation with the help of elements of autocratic regime and anti-liberation forces in the country in the name of democratic movement.

The meeting held at the poura-point recently was addressed, among others, by Rafiqul Islam Shishu, Abdul Malik Manik, Abdul Kahir Chowdhury, Ariful Haque Chowdhury, Abdur Razaque, Ahadus Samad, Falaquzzaman Jaglu, Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury and Shamsuzzaman Zaman.

Mirkadim bridge opens in Munshiganj

MUNSHIGANJ, Sept 17: Commerce Minister M Shamul Islam opened the 130-foot long 'Mirkadim Bridge' to traffic on Thursday, reports UNB.

The bridge, built at a cost of Tk 24 lakh, has directly linked the Munshiganj Sadar with Tangbari.

Addressing a function on the occasion the Minister hoped that the people would resist any attempt to block the country's ongoing development process.

Gun recovered, 12 arrested in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Sept 17: Detectives of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) in separate drives recovered one foreign made SBBL gun and rounded up 12 persons on various charges from different parts of the city Wednesday night, reports BSS.

The abandoned foreign-made gun was recovered from an underconstruction shelter centre at Ambhagan railway colony under Doublemoothing thana.



JAMALPUR: A programme on social mobilisation for mass education was held at the Durmut Soltankhali High School recently. — Star photo

Erosion of river Gorai takes serious turn in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Sept 17: With the rise in water level of the river Gorai, erosion has taken a serious turn affecting large number of people in Daulatpur, Bheramara and Kumarkhali thanas. The river has eroded new areas including houses, offices, educational institutions, business establishments, culverts, roads, schools, colleges and vast tract of cultivable land.

The erosion compelled the inhabitants to move safer places.

In Daulatpur four unions were badly affected. About five thousand acres of standing aus have been destroyed by the onslaught of the erosion. About three hundred houses have been engulfed by the rivers.

The badly affected villages under Chilmari union are, Chakrajapur, Purba Bazumara, Pashchim Bazumara, Pashchim Udaynagar, Uttar Udaynagar, Dakkhin Udaynagar, Charvabanandadiar.

Sarkarpara, Pashchim Amdani Ghat, Purba Amdani Ghat, Purbachar Ramkrishnapur, Pashchimchar Ramkrishnapur, Dakkhin Kharihat, Uttar Kharihat, Dakkhin Sarkarpara, Uttar Sarkarpara and Temadia.

The villages badly affected under Ramkrishnapur union are Sonatala Sarkarpara, Charbhadra, Charuikuri, Bagmari, Madhugari, Islampur, Khari-

bona, Dhakipara, Bhaghot, Kharihatkarpurba, Loknathpur and Charpara.

The villages badly affected under Philipnagar union are, Jotashi, Natunchar, Alinagar and Abederghat.

The villages badly affected under Maricha union are Laxminagar, Purardiar, Chilmari, Bhurkpara, Hatkhola, Koldiar and Machdiar.

In all the unions large number of houses and other structures have been devoured.

The State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief visited the areas recently and distributed relief materials in kind and cash among the victims. But that too was inadequate in comparison with the loss sustained by the victims.

The river erosions in the district continued since last 15 years and devouring 13 villages in eight unions, six primary schools, one madrasah, nine mosques, six high schools and 18 culverts and part of 12 mile long Raita-Mohiskundi flood protection embankment constructed in 1972.

The erosion-hit people said, when this correspondent visited the places on Friday last, that the main river Ganges was flowing eight miles away from its course in 1972 and as a precautionary measure 12 mile long Raita-Mohiskundi flood protection embankment was constructed.

They also said that the surging tide and wave directly hit the banks of the river round the year. But during the rainy season the rate of erosion increase alarmingly.

The erosion-hit people of Daulatpur thana have no land to live or cultivate. The thana administration have been facing problem to rehabilitate those unfortunate people. The people have been rendered jobless already engaged themselves in works like rickshaw pulling or driving of push carts while the aged and unable people have resorted to begging. Most of the erosion-hit people are suffering from malnutrition.

As the river Gorai continues to erode new areas are being devoured. Apart from Poura Bazar, old M N High School, Kumarkhali Degree College, the river erosion is likely to engulf fresh areas, and a number of handloom industries are being threatened. People of Kumarkhali have earlier staged demonstration and called hartals in support of their demand for protection of Kumarkhali town immediately.

The Gorai also eroded at the point of Jayanabad village of Kumarkhali thana where 300 families become homeless and existence of about 50 houses are being threatened.

The erosion has also affected GK project, seven miles away from Kushtia town.

Only a 50-bed hospital for 18 lakh in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Sept 17: The 50-bed Gaibandha hospital for about 18 lakh people of the district, well below the requirement level, needs expansion to ease the sufferings of the rural patients.

Scarcity of life saving drugs is a regular problem. The patients who get themselves admitted in the hospital have to buy medicine from at a high price from the markets.

Absence of doctors is another major problem. Many of the posts for specialists are lying vacant. People are deprived of proper medical treatment.

Hospital authorities have to suspended surgical cases as when the only single surgeon remain absent in headquarters. Moreover, surgical treatment is being hampered

for want of anesthesia facilities.

Most of time of the year the hospital runs without a child, gynaecology, eye specialist to appointment and transferred problems. Besides, the only X-ray machine in the hospital often went out of order.

The hospital fully depends on local power supply. During emergency and surgical treatment on duty physicians often faces difficulties of power disruption during the period of load shedding. But the hospital authorities are yet to set up their own emergency power generating system.

The people of the area urged upon the authority concerned to take step for uplifting the hospital into 100 beds and to mitigate the sufferings of people.

AL's rival groups clash: 10 injured in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Sept 17: The president and the vice-president of Biswanath Thana Awami League and eight others were injured in a clash between two rival groups of the party Wednesday afternoon. All the injured were admitted to the thana health centre.

The clash ensued when Thana Awami League president Mujamml Ali, 45, was attacked by his opponent group while he was sitting at a pharmacy at about 7 pm at Puranbazar at the thana head quarters. Both groups used lethal weapons during the one hour long clash. Several shops were looted.

The clash followed an exchange of hot words between the two groups during the hartal hours Tuesday. It is reported, A tense situation was prevailing.

Atghar, Kuriana well known for guava production

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Sept 17: Atghar-Kuriana Unions under Jhalakathi district are well known for guava production which are one of the biggest producers.

For a pretty longtime huge quantities of guava are being produced commercial in this union and sent almost to all the places in the country.

Vimrulee, a village near Kuriana, is producing huge quantities of guava every season.

In a survey, it was revealed that about ninety per cent families of this union are engaged in guava production as the guava cultivation expenses is less. Guava is usually cultivated largely during the Bangla months of Ashar, Sravan and Bhadra. During this time traders from distant places of the country come to purchase guava from here. Wholesale rate of guava is Taka 150 to Tk 225 per maund, though the price often varies on quality and quantity.

According to some guava

producers of Kuriana, maximum guavas are sent to the capital through trawlers, boats or launches of which a sizeable quantity is being used for making jams and jelly in different factories. In peak seasons guava of different varieties and quantities are being sold worth lakhs of takas in different markets through retail and wholesalers.

According to local people, here are no factories of making guava jam and jelly in the district which would be helpful to them. In that context they urged to the government to establish a jam or jelly making factory in the areas.

Meantime, guava cultivators have been facing acute problems with virus infection in guava gardens. They say, more than 30 per cent of the guava trees have been infected by that virus.

This infection is visible like huge 'black dots', appearing on a guava. These infected guavas are sold at lesser prices.

Teachers' training college to be set up in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 17: Government has sanctioned Tk one crore forty five lakh for setting up the Barisal Teachers Training College here at Barisal during the current financial year.

Construction works of the college will be started soon, sources said.

The literacy rate is comparatively higher in Barisal district than other districts of the country. But this district has been ignored for a long time particularly in the field of education. Still a University, an education board, and a teachers training college are yet to be set up in Barisal, though, it was a long felt demand of the people.

So far it is learnt that this college will be constructed near Kashiipur Higher School at Kashiipur, some two kilometre of Barisal town.



SIRAJGANJ: The services and facilities centre of Bangladesh Handloom Board in Belkuchi still remains inoperative even after two years of inauguration. — Star photo