

## Two brothers, convicted in a murder case, held after 6 yrs

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 20: Two brothers, convicted in a murder case who had been absconding for six years were caught by the police recently.

Mokbul Ali and Osman Ali, two brothers were sentenced to suffer life-term imprisonment in a murder case of Doarabazar thana in 1988 by the District and Sessions Judge of Sunamganj. Since then they had been absconding, police informed.

On getting secret information, Doarabazar police with the help of Sylhet Kotwali police arrested the two brothers from Akhalia area of Sylhet town.

## Sirajganj dist jail inaugurated

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 20: Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury inaugurated the newly built Sirajganj district jail here, Thursday, reports BSS.

The jail bhaban has been built on six acres of land at a cost of taka seven crore to accommodate 165 prisoners providing modern facilities for them.

While addressing on the occasion as chief guest the home minister said: there is no provision for caretaker government in the constitution while a democratically elected government is still in power, a caretaker government is a selected and weak one which in no way can be substituted to an elected one.

Listing the achievements of the present government, the minister said political stability was a pre-requisite to sustain the development effort by the government. He urged the opposition to avoid hartals, blockades and gheraos for the sake of the common people.

Among others, Mirza Muhammaduz Zaman MP, Anwar Ali Siddiqi MP and Shahidullah Khan MP spoke on the occasion.

## Price hike of dyes, chemicals, yarn, weavers suffer

KUSHTIA, Nov 20: Weavers of the district are facing crisis due to high prices of yarn, dyes, chemicals and other raw materials, reports UNB.

Kushtia was once famous for handloom products. Most of the people of Kumarkhali thana are weavers by profession. A large number of people in sadar and Khoksa thanas are also weavers. The handloom factories in these areas provide job opportunities for a large number of men and women.

But abnormal price hike of yarn, dyes and other necessary raw materials have seriously affected the industry. It is feared that if proper steps are not taken immediately the industry will soon face extinction.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation has raised the prices of cotton yarn to a great extent and as a result the weavers fail to compete with the synthetic products and old garments imported in the country.

Large scale Indian smuggled sares in the local markets are available at cheaper prices.

## 3 get seven yrs RI for carrying smuggled goods

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 20: The Assistant Sessions Judge and Special Tribunal Sylhet, Md Nazrul Islam while passing judgement in a smuggling case recently found three persons guilty and sentenced them all to suffer rigorous imprisonment for seven years each and to pay fines of Taka five thousand each in default or to suffer one year more.

The prosecution case in brief is that three persons namely, Harun, Gias and Olur Rahman were carrying some Indian smuggled bicycles on a microbus from Jakiganj border on February 2 of 1992. The police from Gopalganj thana stopped the vehicle while it was on its way to Sylhet town. While trying to escape, police caught Harun but two others managed to escape. The police also seized the vehicle along with the smuggled items. Police later submitted chargesheet against the three accused persons. The court after examining all the records and witnesses passed the judgement. The judgement was given in absence of the two absconding accused namely, Gias and Olur Rahman. Their punishment would begin on their arrest or surrender before any court of law.

The prosecution was conducted by AFP Abdul Basit and Defence was pleaded by Advocate Abdul Khaliq.



SIRAJGANJ: A view of the north Bengal highway at Ullapara bus stand on a hat day.

— Star photo

## BSCIC will soon go into operation in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Nov 20: The BSCIC industrial estate in Jhenidah may provide at least five thousand jobs in its industrial sectors when it starts its operation within this year.

In 1988 15.7 acres of land was acquired at Dhanbaria in Jhenidah district to construct an industrial estate. In 1991 earth work was completed at a cost of Taka 11 lakh 77 thousand for 98 plots including 61 'A' type, 26 'B' type and rest 11 of general types industrial units.

Construction of overhead water tank was completed in 1993 at a cost of Taka seven lakh 25 thousand. The administrative building was constructed on 123 acres of land at cost of Taka 11 lakh 81 thousand, Taka 8 lakh for road construction, Taka 2 lakh 53 thousand for pipe line and Taka 9 lakh 32 thousand was estimated for electricity supply, a source said.

Talking to the Deputy Manager, Industrial Assistance Centre of BSCIC at Jhenidah told The Daily Star that they could not start the industrial units as electricity supply was not available yet.

The BSCIC authority had forwarded an estimate to the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) for electricity supply. In return PDB submitted an estimate for Taka 91 lakh which was quite high. After requesting the PDB office they once again submitted an-

other estimate for Taka 70 lakh in two phases. The BSCIC authority contacted Rural Electrification Board (REB) to submit estimate for electricity supply. Accordingly REB office forwarded an estimate for only Taka 9 lakh 32 thousand, including source line for Taka 3 lakh 87 thousand, the source added.

He said, electricity connection from the main PDB line might be completed by this month and the BSCIC authority expects to start allocating the plots to some 30 applicants.

The source said that the

cost for per unit of industrial plot would be Taka 3 lakh 67 thousand for per acre of land. The source line of power, including installation of transformer, will cost Taka three lakh 87 thousand, deep tunnel at a cost of Taka 4 lakh 50 thousand and pump driver's quarter at a cost of Taka 3 lakh.

The source also said, at least 5 thousand people would be provided jobs directly, while another 10 thousand people would be benefitted from the industrial estates indirectly.



JHENIDAH: The administrative building of the BSCIC estate at Dhanbaria.

— Star photo

## Banikunja, almost forgotten

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 20: The 'mazar' and other remainings of Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji at 'Banikunja' in Sirajganj town remain neglected for quite a long time.

The residence of Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji is known as the 'Banikunja', situated at the western part of Sirajganj town. 'Banikunja' was the centre of all political and literary activities of Siraji.

A pioneer of Muslim renaissance Gazi-e-Balkhan Moulana Abu Mohammad Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji was born on July 15, 1879 and breathed his last on July 17, 1931 at Banikunja.

Under the British regime, the Muslims of Bengal were the worst sufferers. Siraji had demanded new life to the Muslims. The songs, lectures, writings and philosophy of Siraji were blessings for the then Muslim society.

Once 'Dr Johnson Circle' was established in England centering the famous English Poet 'Dr Johnson'. Accordingly Syed Siraji was called the 'Johnson of Bengal and Siraji Circle' was formed at Banikunja to serve the Muslims who were passing extreme hard days since invasion of the British empire. Eminent poets, artists, social reformers, politicians and journalists used to assemble at Banikunja in search of knowledge and new life.



The historic Mazar of Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji at Banikunja in Sirajganj town.

— Star photo

Golam Ambia Loahali was the organiser of Siraji Circle. Other than the Muslim personalities, eminent scholars like, Narayan Bhat-tacharya, Satyendra Nath Sahityaratna, Akhya Kumar Maitreya, Mukunda Das, Satyendra Nath Mitra (lawyer of Calcutta high court), Moniruz-zaman Islamabadi, Sk Zamir Uddin Bidyabinod, writer of Bankim Duhita, Sk Idris Ali, Khwaza Hasan Nizami and Dr Saif Uddin Kishlu (organiser of Tazim movement) attended the Banikunja on various occasions.

Among the politicians, Mohammad Ali Zin-

nah, Pandit Jaharlal Nehru, Netaji Subhash Bose, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Hossain Shahid Suhrawardi, Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Haq, Moulana Abdullah-el-Baki, Dr Hemendra Nath Dasgupta, former food minister Gias Uddin Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar Palwan, Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Abdul Halim Gaznavi and Mohseeb Alikhan also visited the 'Banikunja'.

Few visit the 'Banikunja' now. With time traditional gathering at the Banikunja is no longer. The family members of Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji can not maintain the place due to economic hardship.

According to information available so far from the family members of Syed Siraji that when the great man died, money needed to buy 'khafan' was not available. Whatever he earned, had been spent for welfare of others.

However, 'Siraji Smriti Sangsad' was formed in 1963. In addition a plan was taken to construct a monument in his memory. The then governor of East Pakistan allotted Tk 5000. The district council paid another Taka 5000 to set up the monument. At last the monument was constructed at the cost of Tk 15000 of which rest amount was paid by his son Syed Asad Ullah Siraji. One bigha land was also donated to set up a mosque and library. But the



The Banikunja area, showing a large, open space with some trees and buildings in the background.

scheme, however, was not implemented. After Liberation, Syed Asad Ullah Siraji was killed in December 1971 for alleged collaboration with the occupation Pakistani Army. The library of Banikunja was badly damaged during the attack. It is said, that when Magistrate Loyed came to Banikunja to impose ban on 'Anal Probaha', he commented 'Siraji was not only a national poet and great orator but also a great scholar'.

The mazar of Siraji now faces extinction in absence of proper care.

## LGED to conduct training courses for contractors, engineers

TANGAIL, Nov 20: Local Government Engineering Department Tangail has taken up a programme to train up contractors, engineers and associates for infrastructure development work under its rural development project, reports BSS.

Under this programme at least 1000 contractors and engineers will be trained during this fiscal year. Meanwhile, forty contractors will be given course on tender and programme development.

Courses will include construction and maintenance of infrastructural development works.

## Farmers gradually giving up growing jute in Barguna

BARGUNA, Nov 20: A good number of farmers of the district are gradually giving up cultivation of jute due to rise in cost of production, reports UNB.

Cultivation of jute has become very expensive due to high price of inputs, including fertilizer, seeds and insecticides, farmers said.

At present, production cost of per mound jute is at least Tk 300. But in the absence of buyers jute per mound is being sold much below the production cost. The growers said they are not getting fair price of their produce due to manipulation of the traders and middlemen.

They said, prices of rice have increased manifold after the liberation of the country but the price of jute is decreasing day by day.

Another report from Sirajganj adds: Jute growers of the district are being deprived of fair price of jute due to absence of government purchasing centres.

The growers are selling green jute before harvesting to local lenders at nominal prices due to lack of marketing facilities.

The lenders are allegedly taking advantage of the situation charging maximum interest rate for the money extended against the harvest as security.

## Four-day workshop on adult literacy

The Action Aid Bangladesh and Campaign for Popular Education jointly hosting a four day workshop on an exciting, effective and inexpensive approach to adult literacy. The workshop will be held at the training centre of PROSHIKA in Manikganj district, says a press release.

About 60 participants will attend the workshop which include delegates from eight countries across four continents, as well as educationalists from leading NGOs. Key guests of the workshop are Judith Bakirya, James Kanyesigye (education experts, Uganda), Oskar Garciaaguttre, Abdon Machado (education experts, El Salvador), Shameem Siddiqi, Md Shahjahan (Bangladesh) and the author of the 'Reflect Method', David Archer (UK). Dr Abdullah Al-Muti Sharfuddin, renowned educationist and Director of Campaign for Popular Education will inaugurate the workshop as the chief guest.

This workshop is the first ever meeting to bring together people internationally to share the new approach. This revolutionary new method is being used in Africa and El Salvador in Central America. In Bangladesh, this method is being used in Bhola by the women of Savings and Credit Groups who are learning to keep their own records of repayments, and to plan how to spend their loans.

## Weekly hats on highways disrupt traffic movement

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 20: The busy roads including the north Bengal highway is occasionally occupied by the traders of weekly markets (hats) causing frequent traffic jams in the Sirajganj district.

It is observed that in every thana, weekly hats are arranged. Due to accommodation problem in the hats, the traders occupy areas on the main roads with goods spreading on the roads. Piles of jute, bags of rice, paddy, grains, pulses and vegetables are kept on the Nagarbari-Bogra highway.

It is learnt from different sources that an influential quarters connected with the weekly hats encourage the intruders to occupy roads in order to ensure higher revenue (toll) collection. On hat days different parts of Nagarbari-Bogra highway including Baghabari, Shahzadpur Talgachhi, Moshipur, Ullapara Railway Station, Ullapara Bazar bus stand, Ullapara bridge bazar, Boalia, Salanga, Hatikumrul, Gurkha, Bhuyaganti, Shahebganj and Chandaikona points of Viswa road are occupied by the traders. Vehicles remain stranded for hours to cross the hat areas. Trucks, bullock carts, rickshaws, vans, and other country vehicles are kept haphazardly on the sides of the roads, disrupting traffic movement.

The only highway for Dhaka bound day and night coaches from Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Fulbari, Dinajpur, Gaibandha, Rangpur, Lal-

monirhat, Jaipurhat, Nilphamari, Bogra, Sirajganj, Naogaon districts and different thana areas are occupied by the organisers of the hats it is alleged.

Other than the north Bengal highway (Viswa road), the condition of the inter-thana roads in Sirajganj district also faces similar situation.

## Ferry services almost suspended in Padma, Jamuna

MANIKGANJ, Nov 20: Ferry services across the Padma and the Jamuna connecting road traffic of northern-southern districts with the capital snapped today as the waters of two major rivers receded below the navigation level, reports UNB.

More than a thousand loaded trucks running to and from the districts were stranded at Aricha, Daulatdia and Nagarbari ferry terminals this evening as roll-on roll-off ferries could not move in the shallow river channels.

BIWTC sources said operation of the big-size vessels were suspended due to loss of navigability of the river routes as shoals emerged near the ghat of the river Padma.

The authorities are maintaining traffic in the Aricha-Daulatdia route at high risks with medium-size ferries, the navigation officials said. But they may have to be closed anytime, said an official at the Aricha ghat.

## Encouraging initiative

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Nov 20: President of the Bangladesh Journalists Association (BJA), Kurigram district unit, Habibulla, has taken up a unique, laudable and highly ambitious scheme of afforestation in his own village at Jotgobardhan under Kantalbari union of Kurigram sadar thana with the help and cooperation from the Kurigram District Agriculture Extension Department.

Habibulla, has already planted over 400 saplings of different varieties of valuable wood trees like shishu, mehoguni, teak, neem, chandan, shal, and many more, covering an area of one bigha of land. He also planted saplings of various kinds of improved varieties of fruits.

This sort of afforestation scheme under private initiative is the first of its kind in Kurigram district.

In connection with the launching of the scheme, a sapling planting ceremony was formally organised and farmers' rally was also held at village Jotgobardhan recently.

Mohammad Tarique Hasan, Deputy Director, District Agriculture Extension Department, was present as the chief guest, while Kalidas Debnath, Subject Matter specialist (SMS-PP), Kurigram Agriculture Department was the special guest. Local farmer Saifur Rahman presided over the ceremony.

It was addressed, among others, by Taizul Islam, Block Supervisor of Kurigram Krishi Khamarbari, local sangbadik Yousuf Ali, Habibulla Khan, Rashedur Rahman, Rayhanul Islam, Kalidas Debnath, SMS-PP, and Mohammad Tarique Hassan, DD Kurigram Agriculture Department.

The speakers assured all cooperation and guidance to the owner of the scheme and said that this afforestation scheme would ultimately benefit his neighbours in giving a pollution free environment around this area.



Partial view of Habibulla's mini forest in Kurigram district.

— Star photo

## In Moulvibazar

## Tk 7 cr flood control project undertaken

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, Nov 20: Water Development Board (WDB), Moulvibazar circle has taken flood control scheme during current financial year, involving Taka 7 crore 8 lakh 39 thousand and 4050 metric tons of wheat.

The schemes included construction and reconstruction of various flood control embankments, pucca wall and boulder revetment of river-banks.

According to the WDB, Moulvibazar circle office source, they have taken up a scheme, under 'Secondary Towns Integrated Flood Protection Project for Moulvibazar district town. The scheme includes construction of 1.34 kilo-meter long flood protection pucca wall, boulder revetment in the both, inner sides of 0.75 kilo-meter long existing flood protection earth embankment.

The government sanctioned Taka three crore 88 lakh 39 thousand for implementation of the schemes with the financial assistance of the Asian

Development Bank (ADB).

The WDB has taken up another scheme for construction of 7.56 kilo-meter long flood control embankment at the left bank of the Monu river from Tara-Passa to Premnagar. Taka one crore 50 lakh has been allotted from the government's own source to execute the scheme.

The source added that a scheme involving Taka one crore 45 lakh under the 'Hail Haor Project' has been submitted to the higher authorities concerned which still awaits approval. The scheme included construction of 2.73 kilo-meter long embankment and five bridges on the embankment and reconstruction of 6.65 kilo-meter long embankment.

Another three schemes has been taken up by the WDB under flood for works programme. According to the source 2,750 metric tons of wheat have been allocated for construction and reconstruction of 22.42 kilo-meter long embankment on the both sides of the Monu river.

## Concern over high rate of smoking among villagers

JHENIDAH, Nov 20: ADHUNIK, an anti-smoking organisation, held a seminar in Jhenidah town on Friday as part of its campaign against smoking that kills the smoker by bits, reports UNB.

Founder-President of ADHUNIK National Professor Dr Nurul Islam was chief guest at the function, organised by the local unit of the organisation. Mohammad Ashad-uz-Zaman presided, a press release said here Sunday.

Expressing concern over the high rate of smoking among the low-income groups, the speakers called for taking the anti-smoking movement to villages where the poor and the illiterate are the majority.

"They are the most vulnerable group and smoking rate is the highest among them," said Dr Nurul Islam.

The seminar assured all sorts of cooperation in strengthening anti-smoking campaign and extending it to grassroot level across the country.

## Mysterious disease claims 50 cattle head in Pirojpur

PIROJPUR, Nov 20: At least 50 cattle died of a mysterious disease that broke out in 11 unions of Mothbaria thana of the district, reports UNB.

Local farmers said with the attack of the disease, the cow suffers from serious stomach problem leading to indigestion and it dies within two to three hours. The common symptom of the disease is non-stop loose motion, they added.

Five cattle died of the disease at village Patakata of the thana on October 10. In the absence of curable medicine the farmers are passing their days in great anxiety.

They urged the concerned authorities to take immediate measures to check the spread of the disease.

## Robbers loot goods worth Tk 3 lakh, injure five

SAVAR, Nov 20: Five people were injured, two of them seriously, when armed dacoits looted goods and cash worth about Tk three lakh from a market at Gazirhat in Savar thana on Thursday midnight, says UNB.

The two seriously injured, Zainul Abedin and Abdur Rashid — were first admitted to a local clinic, but were shifted to a clinic in Dhaka later.

Local people said the gang of about 20 to 25 dacoits broke open the doors of eight shops at Haque Market in Gazirhat area around midnight. They beat the shop keepers with rifle butts before decamping with goods and cash worth about three lakh taka.

## 15 lakh students to benefit Food for Edn Programme

MAULVIBAZAR, Nov 20: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman Friday said, this year fifteen lakh students covering 20,000 primary schools would be brought under the Food for Education Programme of the government at a cost of Tk 240 crore, says UNB.

Addressing a function at the Maulvibazar Mohila College Friday the finance minister said, besides the government will also spend another Tk 250 crore as stipend for 16 lakh girl students of the country.

Saifur said the present government had given top most priority in the education sector in the recent years and allocated Tk 3750 crore this year alone in the education sector.

## DPHE to install 460 tubewells in Rangpur

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Nov 20: To supply pure drinking water in the rural areas, 210 shallow tube-wells and 250 Tara-set pumps are being installed in the district by the Department of Public Health Engineering during the current fiscal year.

Another 350 choked-up tubewells are also being re-sunk in the district.

A sum of Taka 20 lakh would be spent to finish the job.

The entire fund is being provided by the UNICEF.

According to the DPHE officials, at least 81 thousand rural people in the district will be benefitted with the completion of the sinking and re-sinking of tubewells.