

One awarded 10 years imprisonment in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Nov 23: A man was awarded 10 years rigorous imprisonment for murdering his neighbour, court sources said Tuesday, reports UNB. The prosecution story, in brief, was that while cutting grass in their land, Aminul Islam and Samiul of Tartapara village in Madarganj thana were attacked by co-villager, Jahangir Mondol and his accomplices following a previous enmity. Seriously injured, Aminul, was rushed to the Jamalpur General Hospital. Following the deterioration of his condition he was shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where he succumbed on July 11. A case was filed with the police. After examining 17 witnesses and records, additional district and Sessions Judge Nazrul Islam Khan sentenced Jahangir on November 15.

Newly built school building develop cracks

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Nov 23: Severe cracks have developed in the walls of newly constructed school buildings at Raiganj thana. It is gathered that the facilities department of the Ministry of Education constructed eight school buildings in Raiganj thana at the cost of Taka 8.20 lakh each during 1993-94 fiscal year. The buildings are not handed over to the school authorities yet but cracks have already developed in the walls of the buildings, it is reported. It is alleged that the construction works were not done according to the specifications and inferior quality materials including bricks, cement and sand were used. Local people have urged upon the authorities to take steps into the matter.

Six killed in separate road accidents

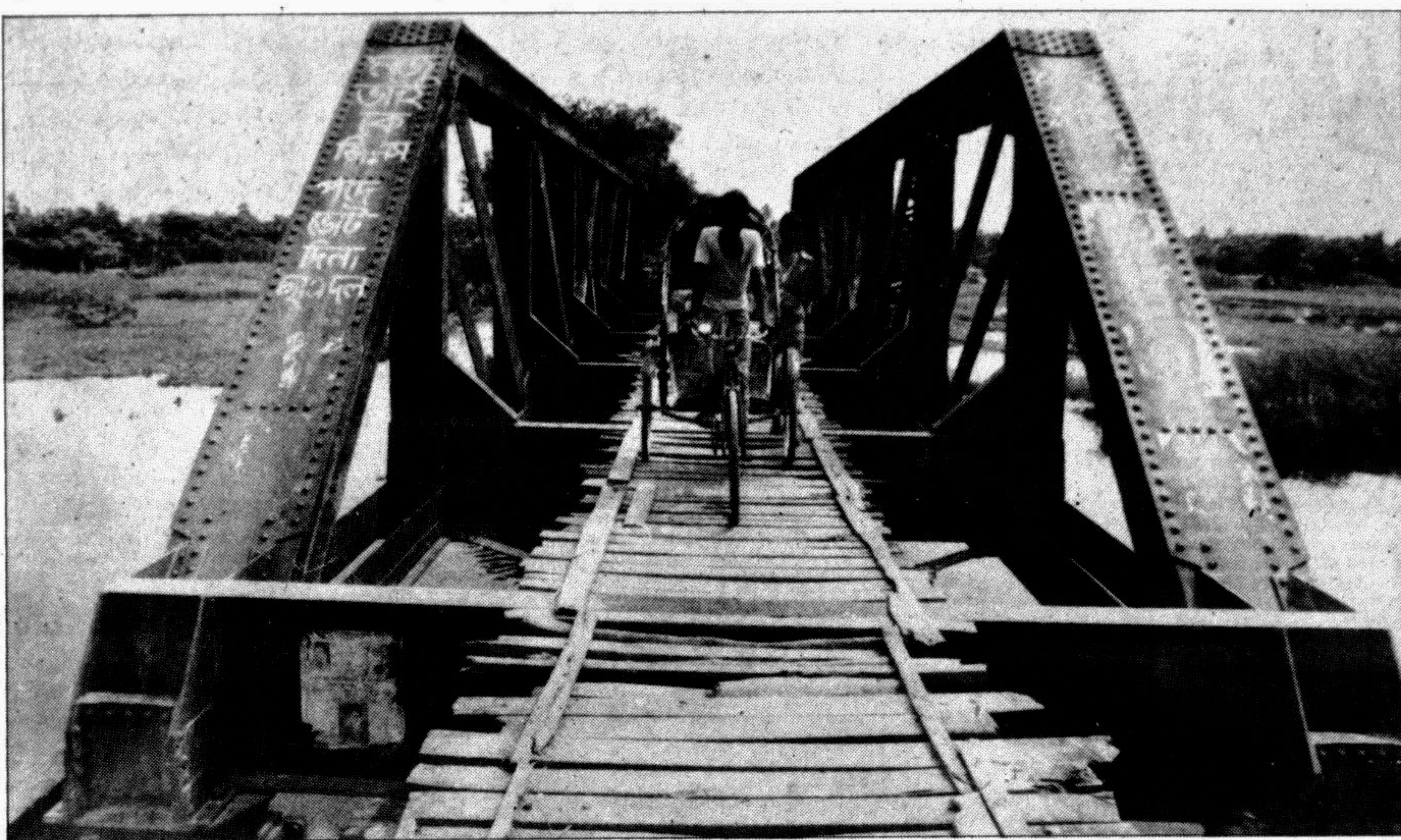
COMILLA, Nov 23: Six people were killed in two separate road accidents on Comilla-Sylhet highway on Wednesday, says UNB. According to witnesses, five youngmen while working on a bridge were run over by a speeding bus. The victims Kudrat Mia, 18, Mashuk 19, Shafiq 17, and Shamsu Mia 16, died on the spot. One, of the three seriously injured passengers, succumbed at Devidwar hospital. In another incident one unidentified pedestrian was killed on the spot on the same road at Bakarnagar village when a running bus knocked him down from behind.

Smuggled goods worth Tk 2.59 lakh seized

BRAHMANBARIA, Nov 23: Bangladesh Rifles have seized smuggled Indian goods worth Tk 2.59 lakh from a Dhaka bound Inter-city train at Brahmanbaria Railway Station, says UNB. Acting on a tip, the jawans raided the Joyantika express and recovered 90 bottles of phenisyl syrup, 200 pieces of sarees and spares parts of one van on November 16. One Anwar Hossain was also arrested from the spot. The seized goods were deposited with the Akhura Customs Office. On the same day, Nabnagar police also seized contrabands including 30 bags of sugar worth Taka 1.50 lakh from two engine boats at Rasulpur village. None was arrested in this connection. A case has been filed with the police.

Armed gang loot goods from shops

MAJDEE COURT (Noakhali), Nov 23: A gang of armed dacoits stormed the Shaheerhat market in Begumganj thana and looted cash and valuables worth about taka one lakh, reports UNB. According to witnesses, the dacoits numbering 20 to 25 raided the market on Thursday night and looted cash and valuables from 26 shops. The people of the adjoining areas rushed to the spot and after a hot chase caught one of the dacoits identified as Shamsul Haq of Narotampur of sadar thana. He was later handed over to police. A case was lodged in this connection.



NARAYANGANJ: This bridge, popularly known as the 'Parapardi Bridge', was built in 1968 on Dhaka-Narsingdi-Narayanganj railway route. The railway bridge, however, has remained abandoned since mid-1980s. The local people now use the bridge for road communication. — Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Extensive use of immature trees in factories

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Nov 23: Immature trees in Kushtia, Chuadanga and Meherpur districts are on the verge of extinction because of large-scale use in brick fields and tobacco process factories as the only item of fuel. On the other hand, it is observed plantation of trees, both in private and public sectors, is quite inadequate in comparison with the cutting of trees. It is gathered that brick field owners, finding acute shortage of wood in the districts, are importing wood from the greater Faridpur region where it is reported to be available in large quantities. Due to high rate of transportation cost, cost of bricks has jumped from Tk 1500 per thousand to Tk 1900. It is learnt that in spite of best efforts brick field owners could not procure coal at reasonable prices and as such they have been compelled to use wood as fuel. The brick field owners say that although cost of wood has gone very high in comparison with previous years, yet wood burnt bricks are less costly. They maintain that the cost of coal imported by the government is very high. They rather use wood to keep the prices of bricks stable. On the other hand, high cost of wood as fuel has caused immense difficulties for the consumers who use wood as their only means of fuel in cooking. More than 90 per cent of the total population in the area depend on wood for cooking. It may also be mentioned that Kushtia has become the zone of good tobacco growing area and its quality is quite good for export. Two tobacco re-drying factories have already been set up in Kushtia and more are on the line. A recent survey conducted in rural areas of districts revealed that there were fewer trees in villages because the poor villagers in general have sold them due to their poverty and the purchasers have used them either as fuel or timber as suited to their need. To avoid the trend of indiscriminate use of wood in brick fields and tobacco drying factories, coal in large quantity should be imported and its proper supply should be ensured at a reasonable price.

Taka 26 crore electricity bill remain outstanding in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 23: A total of Tk 26 crore 38 lakh 93 thousand has been lying unrealised in four districts of the greater Sylhet region as electricity bill, according to PDB sources. According to an official source, 13 crore 23 lakh 29 thousand units of electricity were brought to the Sylhet circle from the National Grid during the first four months of the financial year 1994-95 that is from the period July to October while nine crore 43 lakh 89 thousand units of electricity were sold to the consumers. The average system loss in the circle stood 21.27 per cent, the source added. The Power Development Board (PDB) has its Sylhet Circle comprising five divisions. These are, Sylhet Division comprising eight electric supply areas of different thanas of Sylhet district and five electric supply areas in Sunamganj district. Distribution Division, Moulvibazar, comprising four electric supply areas of Moulvibazar and three electric supply areas of Habiganj district. Sales and Distribution Division, Sylhet-1, Sales and Distribution Division, Sylhet-2 and Sales and Distribution Division, Sylhet-3. The three Sylhet Divisions are covering the Sylhet town and its adjoining areas, an official source informed. Of the total amount outstanding, Tk six crore 19 lakh 33 thousand have been lying in the four electric supply areas of Moulvibazar district and three electric supply areas of Habiganj district. These are, Kulara, Shamsheernagar, Bar-Tekha and Moulvibazar in Moulvibazar and Ajmiriganj, Baniachang and Habiganj electric supply in Habiganj district. An amount of Tk 4 crore 21 lakh 75 thousand have been lying outstanding in Sylhet distribution division comprising of eight electric supply areas of Sylhet district and five electric supply areas of Sunamganj district. Besides, Tk nine crore 47 lakh 19 thousand have been lying outstanding in the Sales and Distribution Division, Sylhet-1, Tk three crore 34 lakh 90 thousand in the Sales and Distribution Division, Sylhet-2 and Tk three crore seven lakh 76 thousand have been lying outstanding in the Sales and Distribution Division, Sylhet-3, the source added. These divisions are comprised of Sylhet town and other adjoining areas. However, the source further informed that, measures were being taken to reduce the system loss in all the divisions of Sylhet Circle.

In Kishoreganj

Law, order situation deteriorates

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Nov 23: The security of life and property has become uncertain in eleven unions including pourashava of Kishoreganj sadar thana due to deteriorating law and order situation. It is reported that different sorts of crime are rampant here. Peace loving people of the thana have been passing their days amid fear and panic. Robbery, theft, kidnapping, hijacking, toll-collection, pick-pocketing, armed clashes between rival groups, rape, murder, gambling and other anti-social activities have increased in the thana and the number of crimes stood much higher than the previous year. The role of law enforcing agents over most of the incidents is questionable. They usually play silent or mysterious roles in most of the cases which also bring suspicion among the people, it is alleged. On the other hand, the police refer to the shortage of police force, vehicles and hazardous communication facilities. Besides, it is commonly alleged that most of the crimes are not registered accurately. The police do not supply any information regarding crime to the local journalists on time. They show various causes including absence of concerned officer and other flimsy grounds. While talking to The Daily Star Abdul Matin, Officer in-charge of Kishoreganj sadar thana, said they were trying their best to bring things under control but were facing numerous problems. He also said that the villagers hardly cooperate with the law-enforcing agencies. But the local people's opinion is that police were harassing innocent villagers in the name of curbing crimes. Sources said, some present and ex-UP chairmen and members and some local influential people are directly or indirectly linked with many crimes but police in spite of their knowledge of this were reportedly not touching them. Toll collection is also rampant at different places of the thana. Moreover, none is found to check the large-scale corruption, some people complained. Traders, dealers and contractors have to pay shares to the local mastans to the knowledge of the authorities. As if this were a system, some miscreants have created panic in different town areas, it is alleged.

Mini fishery project in Barisal Div

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 23: Bangladesh Agriculture Extension Department (BAED) has taken up a programme to introduce 'mini fishery project' in Barisal Division, says BSS. S B Sarkar, Additional Director, Bangladesh Agriculture Extension Department, Barisal region, said that one pond each in 38 thanas of six districts will be brought under this programme this season experimentally to educate the farmers the methods of pisciculture. The farmers will cultivate vegetables on the bank of the pond and fish in the pond, the source added. Government has sanctioned Tk 3.04,000 for the implementation of this programme, he added. Meanwhile, BAED, has trained some block supervisors, subject matter officers, assistant agriculture officers and subject matter specialists (Crops). The programme is likely to play a great role for the socio-economic development of the farmers of Barisal, Jhalakati, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuakhali and Barguna districts of the division, the source said.

Business centre in Kurigram lacks conservancy services

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Nov 23: Kantalbari bazar, one of the biggest business centres of Kurigram sadar thana has long been lacking adequate accommodation, supply of pure drinking water, proper drainage system and conservancy services. During the last few years the haat was not expanded with the growth of population creating severe stalemate in business transactions. The roads inside the haat are not spacious enough to facilitate easy movement. Besides, indiscriminate establishment of shops has further narrowed the roads which also have been in bad shape for want of renovation. The haat authorities care little to keep the market neat and clean, it is alleged. Although they realise increased taxes from the traders, heaps of garbage and filth are always dumped inside the haat area polluting the atmosphere. There exists no drainage system in the markets. Water from the nearby ponds and canals are used as the only tubewell there remains out of order for long. The haat has no sanitary latrine and urinals. People have to respond to the call of nature in the open space much to the annoyance of themselves. There is no dustbin in the haat and hence garbage remain piled up on the roads sometimes blocking the movement of pedestrians. Shops inside the haat have been erected in an unplanned way. About 200 unauthorised shops recently were constructed by some dishonest businessmen with the help of some corrupt revenue officers in the haat. Traders put up their shops on the footpaths and roadsides due to lack of necessary space in the haat.

Over 10,000 erosion-hit victims turn beggars

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 23: At least 10,000 river erosion victims of the district have resorted to begging to eke out their living, a survey report said, reports UNB. The survey conducted by a local social welfare organisation said, about 75 villages went into the river over the last five years rendering a large number of people shelterless. In the absence of government rehabilitation schemes, the erosion affected beggars have taken shelter in the district and thana headquarters. Of the total nine thanas of the district five are situated beside the river Jamuna. These thanas are Kazipur, sadar, Belkuchi, Chauhalli and Shahzadpur and about 75 villages of these thanas have already been engulfed by the river.

Private schools in Narail face problems

From Our Correspondent

NARAIL, Nov 23: At least 50 non-government junior and high schools in the district are beset with manifold problems hampering education greatly, says UNB. At least 15,000 students of these schools are facing problems due to deplorable condition of school buildings, shortage of furniture and other appliances. According to local people, most of these schools lack playgrounds, common rooms, library facilities. At least 25 schools damaged by cyclones and floodings have not yet been repaired. The source also said, many school buildings may collapse at any time. These schools established by private initiatives have been facing accommodation problems with the rise of students over the years. Due to shortage of fund the school authorities cannot undertake expansion programmes. Besides, most of these schools lack science buildings and science apparatus due to financial stringencies.

Crisis of food in drought-hit Sherpur dist

From Our Correspondent

SHERPUR, Nov 23: Acute food crisis has been prevailing in five thanas of the district in the wake of the current drought which seriously affected standing crops. The district suffered massive losses of crops this year due to insufficient rainfall. Minimum fifty-five per cent farmers of the district this year cultivated their land borrowing money from various commercial banks but the drought damaged about seventy per cent of their jute paddy and other crops, as a result, they have lost their ability to purchase food and other requirements and have been passing their days in utter misery for the last four months. Reliable sources said that more than fifty per cent of the poor people and farmers may have to starve due to severe drought in this area of the country. Records show that between 1949 and 1994 there were fourteen drought and semi-drought hit situations in the district. But the current drought passed all the previous drought records. The government however, did not declare Sherpur district as drought affected areas like other drought affected districts in the north. Drought hit people are not getting facilities like other drought affected people of other districts.

In Narayanganj

11-day plan protesting environmental pollution

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 23: Pollution Control and Development Parishad Sunday announced an elaborate action programme from November 22 to put pressure on the administration for protecting the environment of the district from pollution and diseases, reports UNB. The 11-day agitation programme of a voluntary organisation, was announced in a press conference held here at Enaytganar in Fatullah thana. The programme include a sit-in-programme in front of Hossain pulp and paper mill protest rallies on November 23, to 26 and road blockade on November 27 from Panchaboti to Dharmaganj. A torch procession will be brought out on December 2 and a six-hour hartal will be enforced on the next day at Enaytganar including Dhaka-Narayanganj and Dhaka-Munshiganj road, the Parishad declared. Alhaj Humayun Kabir Nur Mohammed, Convenor of the Parishad said, the people of Fatullah, Dharmaganj, Enaytganar and Panchaboti industrial areas have been suffering from various diseases due to adverse effect of acute environmental pollution in the region. They alleged that industrial waste and toxic fumes from the factories particularly from Hossain Pulp and Paper mill and Hossain Dying Factory are causing water and air pollution in the areas. They said, inspite of repeated protests and demand to adopt measures for protecting the environment from further degradation, no effective steps has so far been taken under consideration by the administration.

365mt of wheat allotted for development projects

From Our Correspondent

BHOLA, Nov 23: Government has sanctioned 356 metric tons of wheat under Test Relief Programme (TRP) during the current winter season, says UNB. Official sources said, a total of 175 projects will be implemented under the programme in seven thanas and three pourashavas during the season. The projects include repairing of roads and culverts and development of rural drainage system.



MOULVIBAZAR: The President of the Bangladesh Journalists Association (BJA) of the district unit, Radhika Mohan Goswami speaking at the inaugural function of the conference of Monipuri Students Council held at Kamalgonj recently. — Star photo



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: The Social Science Department of the university and UNICEF jointly organised a seminar on 'Children's Right' in the country recently. The President of the Social Science Department, Tobarak Hossain is reading out the key-note paper of the seminar. — RU photo