

IRRI-boro crop output target may fall by 45 pc in Jamalpur

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Dec 2: The IRRI-boro cultivation in six thanas of the district is likely to face serious problem in the coming season due to imposition of heavy electric charges on use of shallow and deep tubewell.

The production target of the crops may fall by 45 per cent, according to local farmers. Price hike of fertilizers pesticides and crisis of fuel (diesel) may also add to the expected shortage in output.

It was learnt that the local PDB authority instead of depending on meter reading, will prepare electricity bills through estimation against electricity consumers of shallow and deep tubewells this year.

According to Power Development Board (PDB) provisions, every shallow tubewell project has to pay Taka 5000 per season as power charge while a deep tubewell project has to pay between Taka 12,000 and 16,000.

It is further informed that the local PDB authority hardly follow any system for preparing electricity bills. Recently, Taka 12,000 was realised as power bill from a deep tubewell scheme while Taka 10,260 was realised from a shallow tubewell scheme in the district.

There are over two hundred deep and shallow tubewell schemes in the district.

It is learnt that prices of

urea, TSP, zinc, ammonia-sulphate have increased to a great extent. As a result, the poor farmers are unable to use required quantity of fertilizers in the crop fields. Thus, the production of crops is likely to be seriously affected.

According to an official source, a massive programme was taken to cultivate IRRI-boro crops on about seven lakh hectares of land in the seven thanas of the district during the current seasons. Production is fixed at 6.50 lakh metric tons but there is very little chance of achieving the target of production.

Indian fertilizers and pesticides are being smuggled into the country in huge quantities. The markets in border areas of Jamalpur, Sherpur and Mymensingh districts have been flooded with Indian fertilizer and pesticides.

It is learnt that locally produced urea (50 kg bag) cost between Taka 275 and Taka 290 while the government has fixed the price at Taka 203.50 TSP, zinc and others fertilizers are being sold at much higher prices in the local markets.

When contacted a dealer said that the fertilizer factories at Jamuna, Ashuganj failed to supply fertilizers as per requirements. It is reported that small dealers could not supply fertilizers from Jamuna fertilizer factories in other local markets. It is alleged that some brokers are buying fertil-

izer from factories and are selling at much higher prices.

It is also reported that, at least 19 electric transformers were stolen from the electric poles in the district during the last one year. Electric supply will also be affected in irrigation-sector. It is alleged that, some PDB employees are involved for this reason.

Meanwhile, frequent disruption of power supply in six thanas is causing heavy losses to industrial and agricultural sectors.

Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) supplies electricity through Jamalpur distribution centre to Bakshiganj, Dewanganj, Melandah, Sarishabari, Islampur and Sadar thanas. In these places many new industrial unit were set up recently depended on electricity. Most of these units are incurring losses due to frequent power failure.

Power supply remains suspended for about six to eight hours every day in the town areas. This situation has forced closure of many power pumps, paddy husking mills and others small industries. Agricultural production in Melandah, Islampur, Dewanganj, Bakshiganj, Sarishabari and Sadar thanas have been hard-hit due to continued power suspension.

When contacted PDB office at Dewanganj could not give any positive answers on the issue.

Senior journalists, teachers recall late S M Ali's contributions

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Dec 2: In memory of late S M Ali, the founder Editor of The Daily Star, a discussion meeting was held here at the local bar association hall two weeks ago.

The memorial meeting was organised by the local socio-cultural organisation called 'Forum'.

The meeting was presided over by the Convenor of the organisation Nurul Islam Joarder.

Rowshan Ali, principal of the local girls' college was present on the occasion as the chief guest while Mahtab Uddin, Assistant Head Master of local "Chudanga Academy" and a senior journalist of the locality was the special guest on the occasion.

Among others who spoke on the memorial meeting were Dr Ashab-ul-Haq, former member of parliament and President of BMA, Chuadanga unit. Fote Ali Mia, Monwar Hossain Bishu, Secretary of local Arindam Sanskrit Gosthi and Quamrul Arefin, The Daily Star Correspondent of the district.

The speakers at the meeting recalled contributions journalism by late S M Ali. The speakers also recalled the contribution of late S M Ali for the country.

Two killed in road accidents

MANIKGANJ, Dec 2: A man was run over by a Dhaka-bound minibus from Shaturia at Joy-pura village in Dhamrai thana on Dhaka-Aricha highway recently, police said, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Nazrul Islam 40, a rice trader of Mymensingh district.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with Dhamrai Police.

Another report from Jhenaidah says: A youngman was run over by a bus at Arap-pur bus stand in the town on Jhenaidah-Kushtia road Thursday, police said.

Witnesses said Sudeb 20 was riding a bicycle to his village Takiarpota in Harinakundu thana when the Kushtia-bound bus knocked him down. He died instantly.

The driver of the bus fled away. A case was filed with Sadar thana in this connection.

18 policemen punished for negligence of duties

From Our Correspondent

HABIGANJ, Dec 2: Eighteen police men of different posts in Habiganj district have been suspended during the last 10 months on charge of corruption and negligence of duties.

It is learnt from official sources that, a police sub-inspector has been demoted to Asst-Sub Inspector (ASI), an ASI and a Habildar have been demoted to post of constable.

One constable has been removed from services on charge of corruption and negligence of duties.

Meanwhile departmental action has been taken against other alleged police personnel.

Kidnapped girl rescued from brothel

SATKHIRA, Dec 2: A girl kidnapped in last May was at last rescued by the police from a brothel on Monday, says UNB.

According to police, Shahana Khatun 15 daughter of Abdul Mazed of Bakshukhali in sadar thana was kidnapped by co-villager Abdul Majid who took her to Khulna and Rajbari and finally sold her to a brothel at Daulatdia.

Police sent Majid to the court after his confessional statement.

Truck falls into wayside ditch, 1 killed, 4 hurt

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 2: A rice-laden truck fell into a wayside ditch at Purbha Baotara village near the town on Wednesday night leaving one dead and four others injured, witnesses said, reports UNB.

Chand Miah 45, a rice trader, died instantly when the truck carrying rice from Belkuchi to the town met with the accident.

The injured, including a helper of the truck, were admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital where their condition was stated to be critical.

Khulna University: A journey full of promise

The Vice-Chancellor of the Khulna University, Dr Md Golam Ali Fakir, recently talked to The Daily Star. He was interviewed at the university campus by Sub-Editor Naimul Haq.

DS: I understand it took long to establish the university. How did it start?

VC: As you know, Khulna was the only division which did not have a university. This was certainly not a happy situation. Back in 1970 a number of teachers including myself formed an association which called for a university in Khulna. I was the president of the association. We put forward a proposal and a framework for the university. The sailing did not appear easy. We occasionally went on strike and even resorted to hunger strike. Finally in 1986 two committees were formed by the government - one for selection of a site and the other for working out the faculties. At last Khulna University was born in January 1987.

DS: Do you think you have all the necessary facilities to run the university?

VC: No. I feel we have still a long way to go. Until 1989 there was pace lacking in its development works. Most of the infrastructure was not in place. I revised the university budget proposing a 15 per cent raise which the Education Ministry ultimately approved. After eight months I asked for the allocation to be raised by another 10 per cent. This too was approved. With more money in our hand we were able to speed up the work. In fact, the administrative and the faculty buildings were constructed in just one year. A two-storied building to serve as students' dormitory is under construction. There will ultimately be eight halls for some 3,500 students, six for boys and two for girls. We have plans to offer more facilities. Advanced technology is one of them. We hope to have donor's support in this sector.

We plan to exchange advanced technology with other institutions and government bodies. The university offers limited subjects for research. Our Centre for Research, Testing and Consultancy (CRTC) offers professional advice and services and our Centre for Environment and Disaster Management (CESDM) is available for research on environmental and disaster management issues. We, however, lack necessary facilities to conduct research into the use of rich natural resources that the region possesses.

DS: You said you have plans to offer more facilities. What are they?

VC: In the next five years we hope to add more subjects. At present the university offers six disciplines: Architecture, Computer Science and Engineering and Urban and Rural Planning under the School of Science, Engineering and Technology and Business Administration under the School of Management and Business Administration and Forestry and Wood Technology and Marine Biology under the School of Life Sciences. Disciplines like Pharmacy, Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering, Econometrics, Fine Arts, Water Resources Management, Oceanography and Food and Nutrition Sciences would be opened in phases. The university also plans to open a modern languages centre. German, French, Arabic, Japanese, English etc will be available for studies here. The university has already decided to introduce postgraduate programmes in three disciplines: Business Administration, Computer Science and Engineering and

Urban and Rural Planning. We also have plans to set up our own nursery, dairy farm, hatcheries and a computer training centre. These will be income-generating programmes to collect additional fund to support our programmes.

DS: I understand that students politics here is totally absent. You must be enjoying a peaceful environment. How was it possible and how do you intend to keep student politics away from the campus?

VC: The students and the teachers agreed in principle that they would not be involved in politics. This is not limited merely to the campus. It is difficult to say how long we can maintain this peaceful environment but the system of education here is such that the students are engaged in studies round the year. Examinations in semesters, field trips, library works etc keep the students busy round the clock. They hardly find idle time to indulge in politics. In three and a half years no plan, according to our academic

calendar, has failed. In fact, we are four weeks ahead of the scheduled calendar. This clearly shows how serious the students are in their studies. We hope this cooperation would continue.

DS: Did you have to face any unrest or mishap in the campus?

VC: No. Ever since the start of the classes in August 1991 we have no record of any violence. The teachers, the staff and the students including 84 girls out of a total of 572 enjoy secure campus atmosphere. So far we haven't had any report of anyone having been addicted to drugs.

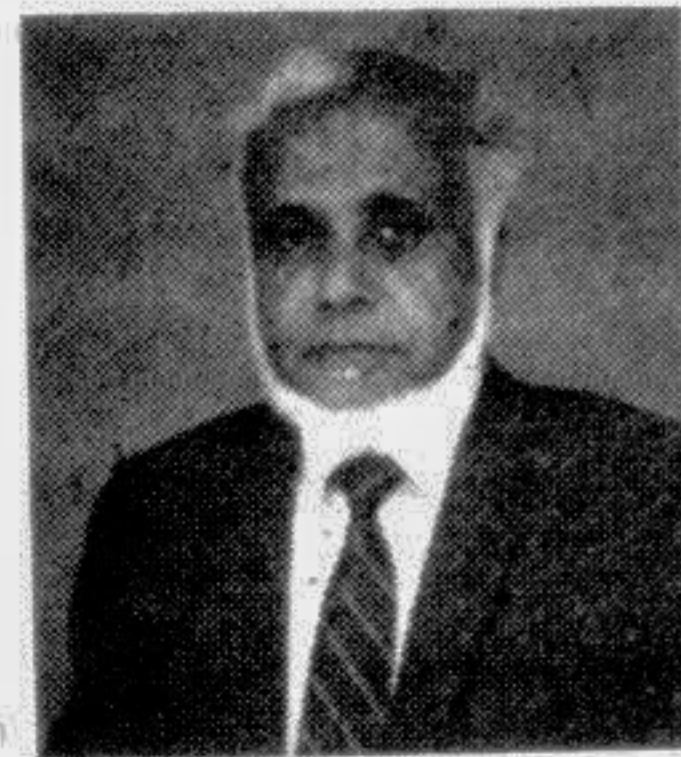
DS: The university organised a seminar on integrated management of the Ganges flood plains and the Sundarbans ecosystem in July this year. What was the main focus?

VC: The main objective was to identify some of the problems of the Ganges flood plains and the Sundarbans ecosystem which seriously threaten development of this region. We want to develop an integrated management strategy for the flood plains and the Sundarbans for proper exploitation, utilization and conservation. We suggested a guideline for development of academic research programmes in the fields of agriculture, biology and natural science at Khulna University. The southwestern part of the country houses natural, biological and genetic diversity of plants, birds, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibious fauna. The marine and brackish water represent an area of rich biological resources. Numerous problems like siltation, increase in salinity, desertification, stagnation of water etc are seriously affecting the ecosystem of the region resulting in environmental imbalance. The university, in cooperation with other organisations can play a vital role in the sustainable development of the region.

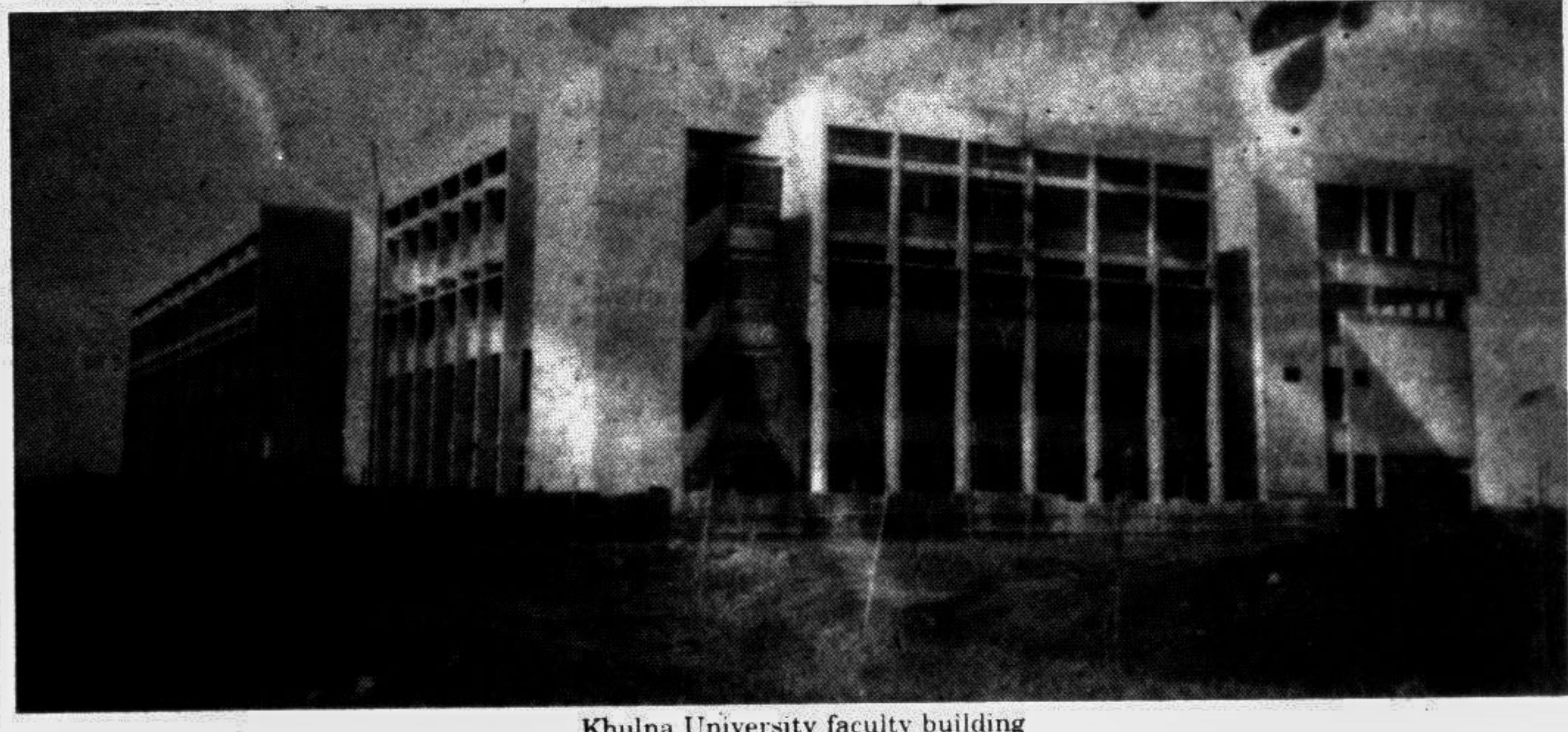
DS: How do you view the future of the university?

VC: A very bright future indeed. As I said earlier, we have already achieved good progress in our work. If this trend continues we are sure to receive stronger support from the government. Hopefully by June next year we shall hold the first convocation to award four-year degrees. That would be a major step forward.

DS: Thank you Mr Vice-Chancellor.



Dr M G A Fakir



Khulna University faculty building

Tk two lakh robbed from a house in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, Dec 2: A gang of armed dacoits on Wednesday night stormed into a house at Alipur in sadar thana and looted cash and valuables worth about Tk two lakh, reports UNB.

Police said, Shubhash, the owner of the house, was critically injured when the looters exploded cocktails. He was admitted to Satkhira Hospital.

Fishing nets worth Tk 1 cr seized

BARISAL, Dec 2: Fisheries officials in a raid in Meghna Jalmahal area seized illegal current nets worth over Taka one crore, says UNB.

They also arrested 12 people for fishing in the area. The seized nets were burnt to ashes, said an official handout.

Over 2000 cases were filed during the last January-September against the people for violating fishing rules.

Chandpur salt mill owners decide to make iodised salt

CHANDPUR, Dec 2: Salt mill owners of the district have decided to produce iodised salt in their mills from Saturday, says UNB.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of the local Salt Mills Owners Association (SMOA). UNICEF representatives in Bangladesh and local BSCIC officials on November 27.

Khorshedur Rahman Majumder, president of SMOA Chandpur unit, presided over the meeting.

'Let us break the vicious cycle of poverty'

MANIKGANJ, Dec 2: Chief Whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain Wednesday emphasised on concerted efforts and hard work for building a flourishing future for the nation and to make the independence meaningful, says UNB.

"We must turn the millions of jobless hands into tools of production", he said, urging all to carry forward the country-wide canal digging programme to total success.

Addressing a public meeting at Gheor, Khondaker Delwar said, the country was now heading towards achieving a new dimension in economic uplift, especially in the fields of agriculture, pisciculture and planned afforestation. "We must keep ourselves in touch with these developments", he added.

The Chief Whip later presided over a meeting on canal digging schemes at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room here.

Delwar lauded the foresightedness of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman and said, it was Zia who thought about the

leeming millions and realised the potentiality of the country's soil.

"It is our resourceful masses whose endeavours now took the country to the door step of self-sufficiency in food."

He said a total of 543 kilometres of canal were excavated and re-excavated across the country in the last fiscal year and the progress rate of this programme was 70 per cent.

A total of 20 crore taka and 20 metric tons of wheat were also allocated for this programme for the current year, he added.

The Chief Whip stressed the need for planned excavation of canals to derive maximum benefits in the form of increased fish and agricultural production as well as tree plantation on both sides of the canals.

"We have no other way but to break the vicious cycle of poverty through painstaking and sincere efforts" he said.

Khondaker Delwar visited the site of Titas Gas Distribution project at Gheor, to be initiated for the people.

Smuggled goods worth Tk 10 lakh seized in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Dec 2: BDR personnel of 20 rifle battalion seized Indian contrabands worth Taka 10 lakh by conducting separate anti-smuggling drives at Durlabhpur Haripur and Harirampur in the battalion area recently. BDR sources said here recently says a BSS report.

The smuggled goods included current net, playing cards, glass and than-cloths.

The smugglers narrowly escaped and the seized items were deposited with the Rajshahi Customs office, the sources said.

Saroda Sundari Women's College freshers' reception held

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Dec 2: A Reception was accorded to the new comers and outgoing students of the Government Saroda Sundari Mahila College at a function at the college premises on last Sunday.

The Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mohammad Glasuddin attended the function as chief guest while the district Deputy Commissioner K M Nurul Huda was the special guest at the function. President over by Professor Mia Lutfar Rahman, Principal of the college.

The chief guest in his speech assured that he would try his best to solve the problems of the college mentioned earlier in an address of welcome.

The function was rounded off with an entertaining cultural show participated by the students of the college.

It may be mentioned here that the institution has been adjudged the best college in the national level this year.



BRAHMANBARIA: The BDR men of 23 battalion recently seized Indian smuggled goods which included, sofa cover, steel plates clothes from Mantala of the district. — Star photo