

Govt approves revised storage tax at Mongla Port

MONGLA, Sept 30: The government has approved the revised storage tax and free-time for the empty containers at Mongla Port in Khulna, reports UNB.

The revised rate will be effective after the gazette notification to be published soon.

According to the decision, no storage charge will be needed for empty containers up to 20 feet or more and other equipments for the first seven days.

However, a fee of 1.5 US dollar will be charged for container up to 20 feet and three dollar will be charged if the size of the container exceeds 20 feet from 8 to 14 day. Besides, the tax for the whole or part of a day, will be 3 and 6 dollars for the respective categories of containers from the 15th day.

It is hoped that the revised reduced rate will encourage the port users to transport the containers to and from the port frequently, said an official handout.

Robbers decamp with booties worth Tk 2 lakh

From Our Correspondent
PATUAKHALI, Sept 30: A dacoity was committed at a house in Patuakhali town in the small hours Friday.

An armed gang of some 10 robbers made their way into 'Sirajmahal', house of one Abdul Halim at Water Works Road in the town breaking the window girls around 3 am.

They decamped with booties worth some Tk 2 lakh from the house. The loot includes cash money and 20 tolas of gold ornaments, seven wrist watches, a camera and a cassette player.

There was no male member of the family in the house when the dacoity occurred as Halim, a foreign wage earner, resides in Kuwait.

A case was registered with the sadar thana but, none could be arrested till writing of the report.

Alleged women traffickers held, 5 rescued

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 30: Bangladesh Rifles rescued five girls from a hotel at Kumarpara in the city and arrested the hotel owner and five others recently.

According to BDR sources, they suspected that the girls were brought to be trafficked across the border.

The girls, on the other hand, said that they came to Rajshahi for a visit. Among the girls, Ruma and Runa, claimed to be students of Mirpur College, Dhaka, while Sabina, Asma and Rita claimed to be university students.

BDR later handed over the arrested persons to the Boalia police. The girls were sent for interrogation.

A case was filed in this connection.

Erosion leaves 500 families homeless in Noakhali

From Our Correspondent

NOAKHALI, Sept 30: The erosion of river Meghna has rendered at least 500 families homeless at Nalchira and Shukchar union of Hatiya thana in the district.

The absence of proper arrangement to check erosion has left about 50,000 people homeless in the last 23 years.

It was reported that about 98 per cent of Horni union and Chanandi union has been completely eroded.

In the absence of government rehabilitation scheme, the affected people are now passing their day in great distress.

The homeless people urged the government to take immediate steps to rehabilitate them.

Negligence ends a leper's life

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 30: Sirajul Islam, 23, of Sadhur More in the city committed suicide for being unable to bear negligence and hatred of the society. He was a patient of noninfectious white leprosy. Nobody kept any relationship with him. He could not go to school or get work for livelihood for the reason. Being unbearable of the life, he drank a bottle of acid and died late night in Rajshahi Medical College Hospital recently. A case was filed in this connection.

Serious LP gas crisis prevailing in northern districts

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 30: Crisis of LP gas (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) has become very acute in the northern districts of the country during last few months.

People are found to stand in the long queues in front of the shops of the agencies and dealers. There are reports of clashes centring the distribution of cylinders. Taking advantage, some unscrupulous dealers are demanding price higher than normal rate.

The dealers are identifying increasing demand of LP gas against the limited supply of gas cylinders as the main reason behind the crisis. While, the consumers, in addition to the above reason, are alleging that blackmarketing and profiteering tendency of the dealers are the main causes leading to the present crisis.

Whatever it may be, the crisis of LP gas has become very acute and the solution of the crisis seems far long and uncertain.

According to the official sources, the only LP gas plant of the country was established in North Patenga of Chittagong in 1977. It went on marketing in 1978. The plant has a yearly production capacity of 15,000 metric tons of LP gas. This amount is marketed in 12.50 lakh cylinders. Liquefied Petroleum (LP) gas is produced as a by product in Eastern Refinery.

These gas filled cylinders are marketed to the southern and northern region of the country through 5 (LP) gas refilling stations of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) situated at

different places of the country.

In 1985, LP gas supply for the northern region started from Baghabari Depot in Sirajganj district. About 45,000 gas cylinders are supplied now from here to the northern districts every month but the actual demand is more than one lakh cylinders. The Marketing Director of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation M H Chowdhury, who visited Rajshahi very recently to investigate into the crisis of LP gas supply in the northern region, informed that about 43 per cent of the total production of LP gas were sent to the northern districts.

According to the official sources BPC distributed 6,145 metric tons (MT) of LP gas in 1983-84 fiscal year, 7,074 MT 1984-85, 8,832 MT in 1985-86, 8,787 MT in 1986-87, 9,036 MT in 1987-88, 9,216 MT in 1988-89, 7,911 MT 1990-91, 9,100 MT in 1991-92, 9,779 MT in 1992-93 and 12,631 MT of LP gas in the fiscal year of 1993-94 through its 5 depots.

To meet the increasing demand, BPC fixed targets to supply 14,000 metric tons of LP gas in 1994-95 fiscal year, 16,000 MT in 1995-96 and 18,000 MT in 1996-97 fiscal year.

At least 75,000 gas cylinders are required for the northern districts but only 50 per cent of the demand is actually supplied.

According to BPC sources, it supplied, through Padma, Meghna and Jamuna Oil Companies 3,37,406 cylinders in 1992-93 fiscal year in the northern districts. In

1993-94, 4,18,351 cylinders were supplied. The amount of supply of LP gas in 1994-95 fiscal year was 4,84,080 cylinders. During the current fiscal year up to July, 29,737 gas cylinders were supplied to the northern region.

Fuel crisis has become very acute in last 10 years in the northern districts as there is no alternative here to the woods and cowdung to be used as fuel. As a result LP gas becomes rapidly popular in the region especially in the town areas.

Upto 1993, the crisis of LP gas was not so acute. The demand, however, was increasing rapidly. Government then allowed the private traders to import cylinders. About 5 lakh new cylinders have been introduced till now in the country. Now the number of cylinders, that is subscriber of gas, has increased more than the production of gas in the Eastern Refinery which remains the same. This has made the crisis very acute in last two years. The total production of gas should be increased prior to increasing the number of subscribers, experienced sources say.

Besides, repairing and overhauling of the refinery and filling stations and transportation problem due to frequent hartals, abstention from works, floods, draughts etc also contribute to the crisis.

The alleged profiteers and middlemen have made the crisis more severe. It is alleged that some immoral agents and dealers sell the gas cylinders somewhere in the way while bringing from

Baghabari and some hoard the cylinders and making artificial crisis.

The Marketing Director of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation recently visited Rajshahi and other district of the northern region to investigate into the crisis. He said that they had already arranged direct supply of gas cylinders from Chittagong to Rajshahi. The government is also trying to import LP gas from Iran and other oil producing countries and to increase the production of LP gas in the country the government is dealing with a project to set up two LP gas plants at Kailastila and Elenga.

But competent sources said that the project is still uncertain as the donor agency refused to give monetary assistance as the government is not willing to fulfill its preconditions.

It was learnt that BPC under took the project worth Taka 160 crore in 1987 and the World Bank agreed to provide the money on some preconditions. One of the conditions was that the government should increase the price of gas twice the current market price to recover the cost of the project. The government, however, did not accept the proposal. As a result, establishment of the Kailastila and the Elenga LP gas plants has become uncertain.

About 40,000 metric tons of LP gas can be produced per year in the country from its total gas reservoir which is three times more than that produced in Eastern Refinery as a by product of oil refinement.



RAJSHAHI: Mijanur Rahman Minu, Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation, addressed a function of loan distribution programme organised by Rajshahi Samaj Unnayan Karma Sangstha recently. AFM Yahia Chowdhury, Divisional Commissioner of Rajshahi, was also present in the function. — Star photo

RCC Mayor at a function

'Social welfare organisations can play vital role in poverty alleviation'

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 30: Mizanur Rahman Minu, the Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation, urged all quarters of people and social welfare organisations to unitedly work for alleviation of poverty from the society to make life happy and prosperous.

He was addressing a function of loan distribution of poverty alleviation programme of Rajshahi Samaj Unnayan Karma Sangstha (Association for Social Development Works) organised at the auditorium of Rajshahi Shikhya Sangskriti Chareha Kendra (Centre for Educational and Cultural Studies) on September 27 as the chief guest.

Presided over by the Chairman of the Sangstha Prof. S.A.Q.M. Haroon, the function was also addressed,

among others, by A.F.F. Yahia Chowdhury, the Divisional Commissioner of Rajshahi as the special guest, Nazrul Islam, Executive Director of the Sangstha and Mustafizur Rahman, Director of Shah-unnayan (Self-Development), an NGO.

Mentioning the role of Grameen Bank, Mizanur Rahman Minu said that the social welfare organisations could play vital role in poverty alleviation and social development if they worked with firm willforce and honesty.

The special guest A.F.M. Yahia Chowdhury, Divisional Commissioner of Rajshahi said that the service given by the NGOs had already been proved very much helpful for poverty alleviation.

At the end of the function the chief guest Mizanur

Rahman Minu, formally inaugurated the distribution of loan of poverty alleviation programme of the Sangstha. He distributed loans of Taka 54 thousand among the poor and wealthless people. He also returned back savings of last year amounting to Taka 33 thousand to the loanees. Moreover, Taka 2500 was handed over to the family of a dead loanee as lump grant.

It may be mentioned here that Rajshahi Samaj Unnayan Karma Sangstha is working in the region of greater Rajshahi district with a view to help the poor and wealthless people by granting them loans on income generating professions under close supervision. It distributed loans amounting to Taka 60 lakh 20 thousand last year. The rate of loan recovery is about 100 per cent, it is learnt.



SHERPUR: The farmers are cleaning the jute fibres in Shurika Beel in Kameron Char of the district. Jute production, however, was not satisfactory in the district this season. The crop production target fell short by more than 70 per cent in the district according to official sources. — Star photo by Ratan Chowdhury

Irregular attendance of docs, poor medicine stock everyday life of Bandarban hospital

From CHT Correspondent

BANDARBAN, Sept 30: The poor and irregular attendance of the physicians, acute scarcity of medicine as well as sub-standard medicare services made the Bandarban sadar hospital sick depriving the ailing people of the district from the minimum health services, sufferers alleged.

In order to ensure regular attendance of the physicians, the disbursement of salary of four physicians for the month of August, 1995 was suspended, who ignoring the roster duty, were running private practice in the town, official sources from Bandarban sadar hospital alleged, adding that they were served with notice to explain for their irregular attendance earlier.

Hundreds of patients who rush to hospital daily for outdoor and indoor treatment hardly get any specialist or department doctor. The gynaecologist and the child specialist, both the female doctors, who reside in Chittagong, come to see the patients either once in a week or on an interval of 10 days, the sufferers alleged. They have been violating the condition of their employ-

ment to stay full time in their place of posting, the sources added.

This hospital does not have any stretcher to arrange movement of unconscious, disabled and emergency patients.

The patients who seek treatment do not get even a

IU decides not to follow new admission rules

KUSHTIA, Sept 30: The Academic Council of the Islamic University at a meeting has decided not to follow the new admission system as decided by the Education Ministry, reports UNB.

The admission on the basis of SSC and HSC marks could not be a better system for the universities, said an official who preferred not to be named. He said the existing system of admission to the higher educational institutions should be changed, but the method what the Education Ministry is trying to impose is not suitable for the universities.

paracetamol tablet, a local leader alleged. He also informed that medicines worth over Taka nine lakh is issued to this hospital annually.

The present stock position of medicine in the hospital is almost zero, the sources said, quoted the hospital source as saying. The exhaust of stock of medicine at the beginning of the year has created a suspicion among the local people.

On an allegation received from the attending son of an indoor patient, who requested not to be named, that from-morning till 9.00 in the night on September 17 last no doctors had stepped in the hospital.

When contacted, the Civil Surgeon who is the Superintendent of the hospital told this correspondent over telephone that the doctors supposed to perform their duties as per roster. Citing the action so far taken to ensure the attendance as per roster the Civil Surgeon expressed his firm stand not to tolerate any negligence in duty.

He, however, ruled out the exhaust of medicine in the hospital.

R&HD undertakes Tk 1.35 cr project to dev 2 roads

RANGPUR, Sept 30: Roads and Highways Department (R&HD) has undertaken a Tk 1.35 crore project for the development of two roads of the district in the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

The roads are Rangpur-Pirgachha-Sundarganj-Gaibandha road and Rangpur-Badarganj-Parbatipur road. The development works will include earth works, flexible pavement, repairing, carpeting and construction of culverts.

Meanwhile, Rangpur Zila Parishad has undertaken a total of 33 development schemes at a cost of about Tk 1.19 crore in the current financial year.

Of those, 11 schemes will be implemented with the help of a government allocation of Tk 59.70 lakh.

BNP leader's house looted

MEHERPUR, Sept 30: A gang of armed dacoits looted cash and valuables worth Tk 35,000 from the house of a local BNP leader at Kathuli Road in the town on Monday night, reports UNB.

Family sources said the dacoits numbering five to six entered the house of Golam Kadir in his absence at 9 pm and looted ornaments by breaking open the ornament box and cash Tk 2,5000.

Alarming rise in divorce cases in Rangpur, Lalmonirhat

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Sept 30: The divorce rates in Rangpur and Lalmonirhat districts are on the increase alarmingly.

According to a statistics, there are more than 15 thousand females who are victims of forced divorce cases due to various reasons most of which are non-payment of dowry. Most of these marriages were un-registered. Taking advantages the husbands without any hesitations divorced their wives.

There are widespread allegations that the government marriage registration act is completely ignored in the rural areas. As a result the victim-housewives are rampantly becoming sufferers in the society.

It is most surprising that the district and the thana level administration including the representatives of the local bodies are yet quite reluctant into the recurrence of such sorts of misdeeds.

The government instructions to enforce the marriage registration act has not yet been carried out by the con-

cerned authority in these two districts. The appointments of the marriage registrars have not so far been completed since the advisory committee headed by the Deputy Commissioners of these districts did not invite applications from the intending candidates to get enrolled as marriage registrars in accordance with the act.

This has resulted in the non-registration of thousands of marriages.

Among the victims, few were able to approach the court seeking legal action against their dowry greedy husbands while the other victims were deprived of legal cover due to financial hardships and other reasons.

These ill-fated divorced women hardly get shelter in their parents residences and thus they are compelled to lead miserable lives engaged in begging, maid services and anti-social activities etc.

In the busy towns and the business centres, most of the beggars and the prostitutes were found to be divorced

women who came from the rural areas across these districts. The section of the women have been creating a constant social problems for years together without any solution causing a great threat to the healthy growth of the society.

In the recent days such divorce incident in Rangpur town area has sparked a sensation among the elites.

Firoj Sarker, a young advocate of Rangpur bar wedded a BA student Parvin of local Salbon area on August 25 last. Parvin is the daughter of late Jamshed Ali. Amid economic hardship she was doing her higher education depending on the poor earnings of her elder brother and uncle. At the time of marriage bridegroom Firoj Sarker at his personal initiative demanded for a cash of Taka 25,000 and a colour television as dowry. Bride's elder brother, Jahurul and uncle, Abdus Sattar despite financial problems agreed to give the dowry some times after marriage and with this assurance the marriage ceremony was solemnised peacefully.

After 25 days of the marriage Firoj Sarker divorced his young wife Parvin and sent back her to her guardians for not receiving the dowry.

Parvin, however, finding no other alternative filed a case in the court of Sadar magistrate on August 24 last under anti-dowry act.

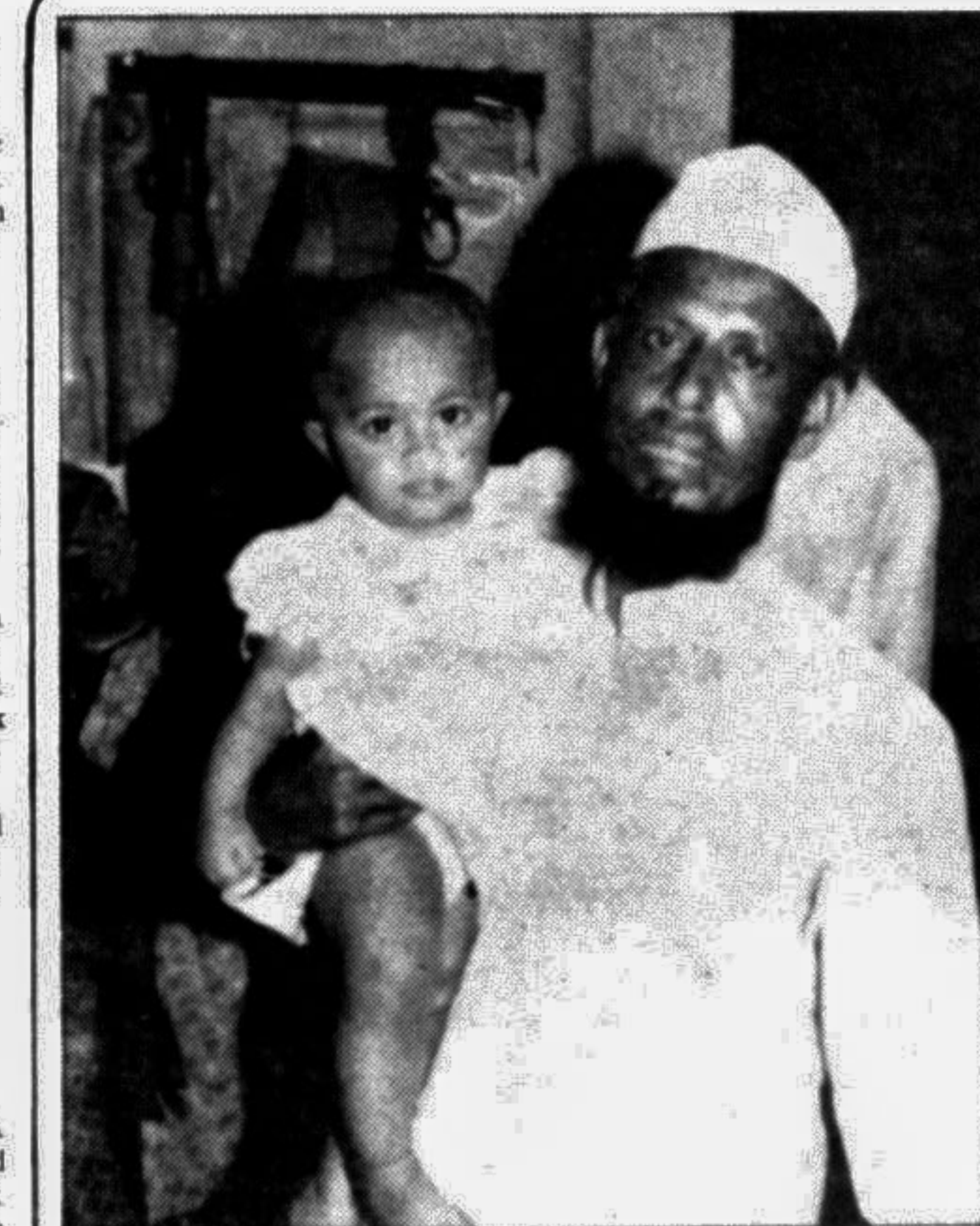
3,200 tubewells to be installed

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Sept 30: Public Health Engineering Department (DPHE) has taken a plan to install 3,200 tubewells in ten southern district this fiscal year, it was learnt.

According to DPHE sources to ensure supply of drinking water in 10 districts they will install 282 tubewells in Jessore district, 341 in Jhenidah district, 405 tubewells Magura district, 244 tubewells in Narail district, 668 tubewells in Satkhira district, 607 tubewells in Kushtia district, 43 tubewells in Meherpur district and 148 tubewells in Chuadanga district.

Sources said, the installation works will start soon and it is expected to be completed by June this year. At least 20,000 families will be benefitted with the programme, it was reported.



NOAKHALI: Local people caught red-handed a man for child-lifting recently. The alleged lifter was identified as Shah Mizanur Rahman of Haripur (Fakir Bari) village in Nasirnagar thana of Brahmanbaria district. The victim, Pratyasha, daughter of Iqbal of Majdee, Noakhali is seen in the arm of the lifter. A case was filed and the accused was sent to jail. — Star photo by Shamsul Farooque