

## National

## News snaps

## Work of Pakshey Bridge yet to start

KUSHTIA, Jan 13: The construction of Pakshey Bridge over the river Padma is yet to start though the feasibility study and necessary survey for the construction work had been completed in 1996, reports BSS.

The government earlier approved Tk 600 crore project with financial assurance from Japanese government for smooth road communication between northern and southern parts of the country. The bridge, to be the second longest in the country, will connect directly 16 northern district to the south-western Bangladesh making it easy to approach Mongla sea port. According to the project plan, the bridge will be constructed at a point 300 metres downstream of the existing Hardinge railway bridge.

## Reception to British minister

SYLHET, Jan 13: British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Mike O'Brien, MP was accorded a hearty reception on his arrival here on Monday, reports BSS.

Organised by the local Overseas Centre at Zindabazar, the function was addressed by the social and political leaders with Deputy Commissioner M Ayub in the chair. The British Minister, responsible for passport and immigration matters, in his address as chief guest termed the existing relationship between UK and Bangladesh as friendly and cordial. He also hoped that the ties would be strengthened further. He asked the British High Commission officials to give special attention to the applicants of Sylhet after he was given a memorandum on various problems relating to Visa and other immigration matters.

## Kushtia Transport Syndicate executives

KUSHTIA, Jan 13: The election of the office-bearers of the Kushtia Transport Syndicate was held at its office here recently, reports BSS.

Shahabuddin Ahmed and A S Rezaul Islam have been elected chairman and general secretary respectively of the organisation. Other office-bearers are Rezaur Rahman Khan Chowdhury, Executive Vice-Chairman and Shamsul Alam — Vice Chairman.

## Wheat sanctioned for uplift work

BARISAL, Jan 13: The government has sanctioned 5,402 metric tons of wheat for repair and maintenance of rural infrastructure of 10 thanas and three paurashavas of the district in the current dry season, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the projects to be implemented are now being prepared at the thana headquarters on an emergency basis. Of the total, 679 metric tons of wheat has been allocated under special maintenance programme of the rural infrastructure, 1,061 metric tons under general programme, 2,351 metric tons for repair of rural infrastructure and 1,311 metric tons on electoral area basis. The projects will help create job opportunity for the rural poor during the dry season.

## Workshop on production of vegetables

BANDARBAN, Jan 13: A three-day workshop on 'production of winter vegetables and spices' concluded here on Tuesday under the auspices of Balaghata Horticulture Development Project, reports BSS.

Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department M Anwarullah presided over the programme while Local Government Parishad member and Convenor of the Agriculture Affairs Sub-committee Abdur Rahim Chowdhury attended as chief guest at the opening day. A total of 30 tribal men and women were imparted training on producing vegetables and spices. AED sources said 1,200 more tribal farmers would also be given training during the current year.

## Smuggled goods seized

COMILLA, Jan 13: Bangladesh Rifles seized smuggled goods worth Tk 23.86 lakh from different border points in the district within six days, reports BSS.

A special patrol party of Javans of 17th battalion of Kotbari raided a truck at Belghar area in sadar thana on January 1 and recovered contraband items worth over Tk 20 lakh. In another raid the Javans of Barajala border outpost recovered 765 Indian sarees worth about Tk 2 lakh from Shalghar in Sadar thana on December 29. Besides, in separate raids BDR Javans from December 27 to January 1 seized Indian goods from Bibir Bazar, Shankuchall, Moyenpur, Shahidul Bazar, Chowdhogram and Nayapara areas. The smuggled goods included Indian sugar, salt, spices, powder milk, Horlicks, baby food, phenisidyl and wine.

## Young girl raped

NARSINGDI, Jan 13: A young girl was violated by some armed miscreants on Friday night at a jungle near the village Char Marjal in Raipur thana of the district, reports BSS.

Police said the miscreants attacked the house of the girl in the village and kidnapped her at gun point. They took victim to the nearby jungle and gangraped her. She was rushed to Raipur Thana Health Complex after being rescued in profusely bleeding condition by the police and the local people. Her father lodged a case with the police.

## Sanction for development of health sector

BANDARBAN, Jan 13: The government has decided to sanction Tk 6.60 crore for the development of health sector in the district, reports BSS.

Officials here said a letter from the Ministry concerned has been sent to the Local Government Council of Bandarban asking to send project proposals in this regard.

## Prizes awarded to teachers

JAMALPUR, Jan 13: A total of 189 teachers, students and librarians received prizes for their best performance in mosque-based child and adult education and library work during 1997, Islamic Foundation, office sources said, reports BSS.

A function was held by Islamic Foundation, Jamalpur district office on January 5 at Jamalpur Public Library. The prizes were distributed by the Deputy Commissioner, Jamalpur Achyuta Pada Goswami. Principal Sujat Ali Miah presided over the function. Moulana Abul Hussain, Pesh Imam of baro Jame masjid and Utpal Kanti Dhar, district correspondent of Daily Sangbad addressed the meeting.

## Contraband goods seized

COMILLA, Jan 13: The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized contraband smuggled goods worth Tk 9,44,42,000 from January to December 1997 from different border areas of Comilla, Brahmanbaria and Kasba, reports BSS.

A BDR source said the goods included 8,300 bottles of wine, 281 kilogrammes of ganja, 27,027 bottles of phenisidyl syrup, 38,328 pieces of sarees, huge quantities of sugar, salt, timber, milk powder, matches, medicine and bi-cycle. 2,202 cases were filed with respective police stations and 69 persons were arrested in this connection.

## 20 uplift projects being implemented

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 13: Facilities Department has been implementing 20 development projects started in 1996-97 fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the projects include construction and re-construction of educational and religious institutions. The work is in full-swing.

## Efforts on to strengthen rural economy

CHANDPUR, Jan 13: State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya Bir Bikram said the present government is determined to strengthen the village economy through necessary infrastructural development, reports BSS.

He was addressing a meeting organised by the Matlab thana Awami League here on Monday. He said it was the life-long dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to establish a prosperous country through changing the lot of common people. He called upon all to work with honesty and sincerity to materialise the dream of Bangabandhu. The meeting was addressed by the Matlab thana Awami League secretary Adv Ruhul Amin, district AL secretary M Saifullah, Yusuf Gazi and others.

## Fishermen defying ban on current nets

SATKHIRA, Jan 13: Current nets are being indiscriminately used for fishing in different waterbodies including the rivers, canals, haors and beels hampering the prospect of fish production, reports BSS.

Local people said a number of unscrupulous fishermen are using the net defying the government ban and fishing fry and undersized fish. Government imposed restriction on using current net and fishing of fry under nine inches. Fish fry are being sold openly in the haors and bazars of the district. Fishermen fish a large amount of fry of various species including Vekti, Parsha, Rohit, Katica, Mrigal and Silver Carp everyday. Some shopkeepers openly sale current nets in the markets, local people alleged adding that law-enforcement agencies or the Fisheries Department officials are not taking any action against them.



SYLHET: Dr M S Nigomba, former Dean and head of the department of Manipuri Language and Linguistics, University of Manipur, India, speaking at a 2-day seminar on 'Socio Cultural and Linguistic Identity of Manipuris' held at Sylhet auditorium on Monday.

— Star photo

## Rural electrification programme facing serious setback

NATORE, Jan 13: Rural electrification programme in the district is facing a setback due to non-payment of huge outstanding bills, stealing of transformers and erratic power supply of the PDB, reports BSS.

Officials of Natore Palli Bidyut Samity-1, which started its operation in early 1981, said the total amount of outstanding bill now stands at Tk 2.15 crore. They said though the existing rate of collection is very satisfactory which is 95.24 per cent, but the outstanding huge amount is hampering the expansion work of the samity.

It has 165 kilometres of supply lines and two sub-stations, each with 15 megawatt capacity.

The sources said, frequent stealing of transformers is also causing serious problem to the subscribers.

Since its inception, the samity lost 384 transformers, most of them from the irrigation schemes. Various types of cables worth about Tk 10 lakh have also been stolen, they added.

Another factor hindering the expansion of the samity programmes was erratic supply from the Power Development Board, the officials said.

7.59 crore as electric bills during the last fiscal year from its 35,678 subscribers.

Among the subscribers, 27,598 are residential, 4,167 industrial, 337 deep tubewells, 1,817 shallow tubewells, 107 LLP and 748 charitable institutions.

The samity covers 1,633 square kilometres of area of 504 villages under five thanas. The thanas are: Sadar, Singra and Bagatipara of Natore and Puthia and Bughmara of Roshan district.

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