

National

Sadipur Bridge opens Saturday

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, May 31: At last, the Sadipur Bridge is going to be opened for vehicular traffic.

The bridge is scheduled to be opened on Saturday (June 3), said an official. The Prime Minister is scheduled to open it ceremonially.

Though the bridge was scheduled to be completed by December 1996, it had been delayed by three and a half years, causing an increase in the total expenditure by four times. Originally, the expenditure was set at Taka 4 crore 60 lakh for the 112-metre long and 10-metre wide bridge. At last, it stood at over Taka 16 crore, said an official.

Sadipur bridge will be the first 'Qualit' Hall bridge in the country. The mid-span of the bridge was brought from abroad under the 'Bridge Improvement and Maintenance Project-II' (BIM).

The official further informed that the schedule was changed several times. The length was also increased to 162.12 metres from 112 metres, and with passing of time and other reasons compelled to raise the expenditure, he added.

Construction works on Sadipur bridge on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway was completed about three months ago, but it remained unused as the authority failed to open the bridge which plays a vital role in the road communication network of greater Sylhet region with rest of the country.

Before completion of the works, it was a great cause of misery for the people of the region. In 1983, a pontoon bridge was first installed at Sadipur,



Newly built Sadipur Bridge

providing a one-way traffic. During the monsoon, the bridge becomes risky in the face of gushing waters. Almost every year, the bridge washed away or drifted away totally disrupting the traffic. Even sometimes, the bridge was overflowed by flood waters due to the heavy onrush of waters from the upper stream.

Suspension of communication became a regular phenomenon almost every year. Even, such incidents took several times in a year. The communication remained sus-

pended for over a month at a stretch after July 28 of 1998 when all the five spans of the pontoon bridge were drifted away by the gushing waters.

A new floating bridge was installed there at a cost of Taka 30 lakh after a month, where as, the original bridge, was installed in 1983 at the cost of only Taka 5 lakh.

Communication through the bridge remained suspended for over 500 hours due to faults on parts of the bridge and faults of different vehicles on the bridge till August 30 in 1999.

— Star photo

Vehicles went out of order 35 times during the period.

People have to suffer a lot whenever, some minor problem or faults take place on the bridge as the one way traffic has to be kept suspended for hours. The pontoon bridge is of 480 feet length and of 11 feet width.

Finally works on the main bridge had been completed three months ago. Unwanted delay was caused by all the concerned quarters. However, the 541 feet by 33 feet bridge has 110 feet retaining wall, 35 feet wing wall, 285 feet drop wall and 600 guard points.

Water level in rivers rising in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, May 31: With the advent of monsoon water level of the Padma and the Goral rivers is rising, inundating low-lying areas of Daulatpur, Bheramara and Kumarkhali upazilas.

Growing rise in water level is also causing erosion along the banks of the rivers. Residents in many areas are shifting their houses to other places.

The rivers have devoured a large number of dwelling houses, offices, educational institutions, business establishments and vast tract of arable land in recent years. At least 20 thousand families were also rendered homeless during the period.

Once the beds of the Padma and the Goral were deep and it could carry enough water. But due to heavy siltation caused by the low flow of water from the upper reaches the normal depth has decreased and river courses have changed threatening the existence of Kumarkhali, Bheramara and Daulatpur upazilas.

The surging current of the rivers directly hits the banks almost round the year. The erosion takes alarming turn during the rainy season.

In Kumarkhali, the Goral has devoured a vast tract of land including part of Poura Bazaar, Old MN High School and Kumarkhali Degree College over the years, besides threatening a large number of handloom factories and other establishments.

During Pakistan period, two dams were constructed to check erosion by the Goral to protect Kumarkhali, but due to the faulty selection of the site these

Pirojpur bus plunge: Two more bodies recovered

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, May 31: Two more bodies of May 27 bus plunge victims were recovered from the Kacha river on Monday.

They were identified as Zahir Hossain, 27, a police official, and Masudul Haq, 26, an army man.

A bus fell in the river Kacha from a ferry at Charkhali Ferry Ghat under Bhandaria upazila in Pirojpur.

Over 100 poultry farms closed

NARSINGDI, May 31: Over 100 poultry farms in Bharab upazila have been closed for various reasons, including financial constraint, throwing several hundred people out of job, reports UNB.

Encouraged by government campaign, many small entrepreneurs set up farms in different parts of the country.

"Once we had a good business and we used to sell chickens at Tk 60-70 per kg. Now those happy days have gone," said a frustrated poultry farm owner looking for a way out.

He said they could not avail of government facilities like farm credit due to procedural complexities and corruption by a section of bank officials.

Their problems also include lack of boilers, selling centres and medical facilities to control diseases.

Another problem that hit them hardest on various occasions is fodder crisis and for this they blamed a section of dishonest traders.

Despite all odds, there are some poultry-farm owners in the district who are doing a brisk business. Helal Uddin in Jagannathpur village in Pirojpur area is among them.

An intelligent young man, Helal said he has already expanded his farm by introducing fish farming and now his yearly profit stands at Tk two lakh.

"In Bangladesh, it's the farm sector that can give you a lot," he said.

Lepers deprived of proper treatment in four dists

THAKURGAON, May 31: About 30,000 people in four districts of the region suffering from leprosy are yet to get proper treatment, although the government has been campaigning to remove the curse of the disease from the country by the end of this year, reports UNB.

Official statistics show that the government and NGOs are providing treatment free of cost. Despite that the number of leprosy patients swelled to 25,000 in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Rangpur and Nilphamari districts. Some 5,000 of them have already rendered disabled.

Leprosy patients are given treatment in upazila health complexes of the government while NGOs are operating leprosy control units in 23 districts.

According to a survey conducted by Denis-Bangladesh Leprosy Mission here, 50 per cent of the country's total 80,000 leprosy patients are in the four districts.

The mission treated over 30,000 patients in these districts during the last 22 years.

Thousands of leprosy patients are now getting treatment in three hospitals and 60 centres in the four districts.

— BSS Feature

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During Pakistan period, two dams were constructed to check erosion by the Goral to protect Kumarkhali, but due to the faulty selection of the site these

two dams did not work properly.

The erosion also affected the main canal of Ganges-Kobdakha Irrigation Project at Chapra, seven miles off the town. The authorities spend a huge amount of money every year to save the main canal of the GK project.

The erosion by the river Padma has devoured 19 villages in eight unions of Daulatpur upazila over the years. The affected unions are Adabaria, Pragpur, Boalia, Arla, Philipnagar, Ramkrishnapur, Maricha and Chilmarkhali.

The erosion has also affected a portion of the Raita Mohiskundi Flood Protection Embankment. The 12-long dam was constructed in 1972.

Sirajganj DIARY

Misappropriation of wheat: Inquiry demanded

Three alleged dacoits held

Nor'wester kills man

Exam by lighting candles!

News snaps

Pilot project

COMILLA, May 31: Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru on Tuesday said improvement in mothers' nutritional status was essential of build up effective manpower, reports BSS.

The minister said while inaugurating a pilot project on Essential Health Services in partnership of the Public and Private Sectors at Brahmanpara thana here. Dr John Lee, Joint Secretary of the Health and Family Welfare Ministry Sheikh Shafi Ahmed and Dr Moazzam Haque addressed the function, among others. The law minister, said the cause of malnutrition was not only poverty but also lack of consciousness.

Execution of verdict demanded

NABABGANJ, May 31: Commerce Minister Mohammad Abdul Jalil said on Tuesday that the execution of the verdict of the Bangabandhu Murder Trial can pave the way for establishing rule of law in the country, reports BSS.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a function which was organised to declare Dallimpur as an ideal village. He also distributed possession deeds among the distressed people under the government's khas land distribution programme. Criticising the four-party opposition alliance, Jalil said it was designed to protect the killers of the Bangabandhu, disturb tranquillity and halt the pace of development and progress.



Artists of Brahmaputra Sangskritik Gosthi, a cultural organisation in Mymensingh town, rendering Nazrul songs on May 26, second day of the three-day Nazrul Joyanti programme at Darirampur in Trishal upazila of Mymensingh district.

— Star photo

Three alleged dacoits held

JHENIDAH, May 31: Kaliganj Thana Police arrested three alleged dacoits at Naldanga under Kaliganj upazila and recovered from them a gun, cartridges and a sword on Saturday last, reports BSS.

According to police sources, acting on a tip-off, Kaliganj Thana Police raided Naldanga area when the dacoits were taking preparation to commit dacoity. Police recovered one gun, cartridges and sword. The arrested persons are identified as Shahjahan, Sukumar and Alim, were seriously injured when local people had beaten them up. They were admitted to local hospital for treatment.

Nor'wester kills man

GOPALGANJ, May 31: A man was killed and 20 people were injured during a nor'wester in five upazilas on Sunday, reports UNB.

The man whose name could not be known was killed in a lightning at Sadullah village during the storm. In another incident, goods worth about Tk 2 lakh were gutted in a fire at a shop in Tungi Bazar. The fire originated from a streak of lightning during the nor'wester that also toppled a large number of trees and damaged thatched houses in Kashin, Kotalpara and Utupara areas.

A noble venture

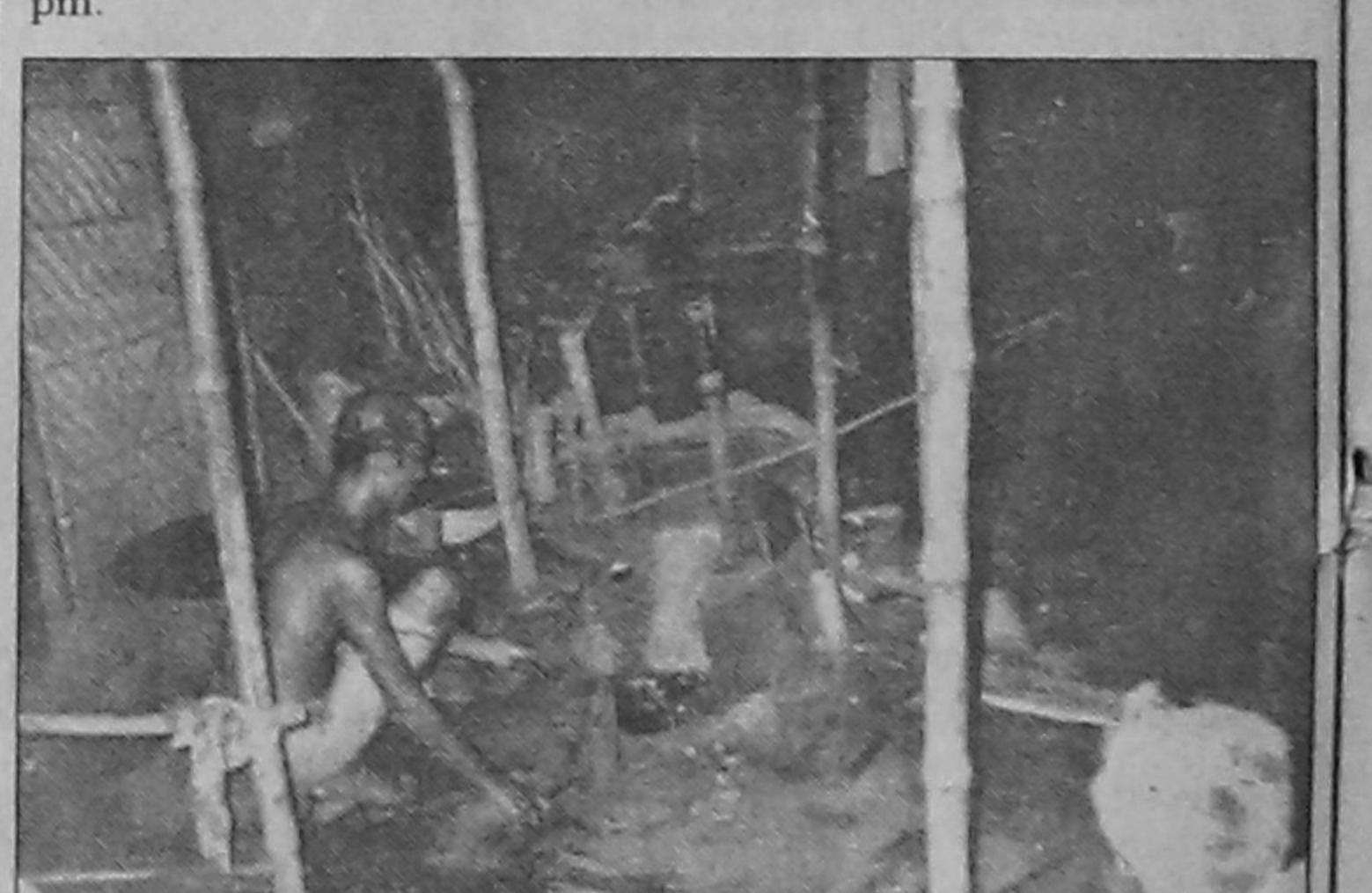
THAKURGAON, May 31: Thakurgaon district jail authority has started a noble venture by providing light of education to 1,200 inmates since the last two years, reports UNB.

Jailer Shafiqul Islam Khan undertook the noble step in 1998, which promptly got support from the district administration and local NGOs, RDRS, a non-government organization, provides educational equipment including books, papers, pencils and chalks in the jail. At present education is compulsory for all inmates. The inmates are upgraded to higher classes amid examination process. Shafiqul Islam Khan beamed with satisfaction said, "it is great pleasure for me that no inmates in the jail need to give thumb impression while leaving the jail." He said he becomes delighted when he sees some prisoners read newspapers. He hoped the initiative would help reduce crimes from the society.

Exam by lighting candles!

SHARIATPUR, May 31: Examinees under Madrasa Education Board had to appear their History examination by lighting candles on Monday morning due to power disruption and inclement weather, reports UNB.

The candidates in Sadar, Damuia and Bhedanganj upazila Alim and Fazil examination centres were forced to use candle to write their answer scripts. A severe storm lashed the district on Monday disrupting telephone and power lines from 7 am to 3 pm.



A Netrokona blacksmith carrying on his trade facing hardship. Many other blacksmiths are also in misery.

— Star photo

'Safe Motherhood Day' observed

FARIDPUR, May 31: A discussion meeting, organized by Family Planning Department in observance of 'Safe Motherhood Day', was held on May 28 in the conference room of the Deputy Commissioner, reports BSS.

Speakers in the meeting discussed the various problems relating to maternity in our country. They stressed the need for training midwives and institutional services rather than the services of Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) that may cause increase of maternal mortality rate which is highest in our country. Among others, Prof M Shahjahan, Principal of Government Sarada Sundari Mahilla College, Dr Abul Khair Mia, Deputy Civil Surgeon, Dr Jalaluddin Ahmed, Sadar Thana Health Administrator, Dr Sohel Ali, Assistant Director of Family Planning took part in the discussion. It was presided over by Dr Matir Rahman, Civil Surgeon of Faridpur while Atiquil Islam Chowdhury, DC of Faridpur was the chief guest.

Scarcity of ARV

Scarcity of AR vaccine is prevailing here.

As a result, the affected victims bitten by dogs are facing serious problems.

Town dwellers have complained the number dogs bitten victims is increasing alarmingly but the local municipality authority are not taking the matter seriously.

Man killed in road mishap

MANIKGANJ, May 31: A man was killed and 13 people were injured in separate traffic mishaps at Barbaria bus stand on Dhaka-Aricha highway on Sunday, reports UNB.

Police said a 38-year-old unidentified passer-by was crushed under the wheels of a running minibus while he along with two others was crossing the road. The two other men, who also suffered injuries in the incident, were admitted to Dhannal Health Complex. While fleeing the scene, the killer bus hit another stationary minibus at the bus stand, leaving 11 passengers injured.