

## Construction of bridge progressing

From Staff Correspondent  
BARISAL, Sept 17: Construction work of the 5th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge over Gokhak Channel in Jhalakati district is progressing satisfactorily.

With the completion of the bridge, the foundation stone of which was laid by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, road communications in the southern region will be easier, local people said. Official sources said 40 per cent of the work has already been completed.

China Hilon Liang International Economic and Technical Co-operative Corporation is constructing the bridge under the supervision of Road and Highways Department at a cost of Tk 80.92 crore including Chinese assistance of Tk 49.54 crore. The Bangladesh government is providing the rest Tk 31.38 crore.

The 918 metre-long and 10 metre wide bridge, which will be 60 feet high from the water level, will have 25 spans.

The bridge will connect Barisal and Khulna divisions with the rest of the country.

## Tree plantation programme

CHUADANGA, Sept 17: All the five Ashrayan projects of three upazilas of Chuadanga district have been brought under tree plantation programme, reports BSS.

The five Ashrayan projects are "Dhuturhat" under Chuadanga Sadar Upazila, "Gargari" under Alamdanga Upazila and "Karpashdanga", "Subalpur" and "Chilla", all under Damurhuda Upazila. According to an official source, so far, a total of 8,968 saplings of both fruit bearing and non-fruit bearing trees have been planted in all these Ashrayan projects. Of the total, 1,000 saplings have been planted in "Dhuturhat", 243 saplings in "Gargari", 6237 saplings in "Karpashdanga", 1,205 saplings in "Subalpur" and 283 saplings in "Chilla" Ashrayan projects.

## Body of youth recovered

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 17: Body of a young man identified as Jamaluddin, 20, was recovered from a place near Hotel Royal International here on Wednesday.

Police suspected the youth was strangled. However, the body was sent to hospital for autopsy.

Police arrested three persons including a woman from Boyra area in this connection. The arrested persons were identified as Sohrab, Robul and Jobeda. Jobeda and Sohrab are close relatives of the victim.

# Jute price worries farmers

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, 17: Farmers in the district are selling jute below the production cost due to sharp fall in demand for the golden fibre.

According to growers, number of buyers of jute in markets is very few. As a result, the farmers are in trouble with their product.

Taking advantage of the situation a section of middlemen are controlling the jute prices. They are offering prices much below the production cost, causing frustration among growers. At present, just is being sold at Tk 250 to Tk 270 per maund in local markets.

Some farmers in Sadar upazila said at least Tk 400 is required to produce a maund of jute fibre, but they are selling the product much below the production cost.

Private and government agencies have not yet started purchasing jute in the current season in the district. However, the farmers are reluctant to sell jute to the government agencies due to 'long-drawn procedure' in getting prices.

Some jute traders said that they are purchasing jute between Tk 250 and Tk 270 per maund depending on quality. They said with the increase in transport and labour costs they cannot pay more than Tk 270 for a maund. In absence of local buyers, jute is being smuggled to neighbouring India. Tosa variety is in demand in Indian markets, farmers said.

In ten south-western districts of Khulna division, 68 thousand and 315 hectares of land were brought under jute cultivation this season against target of one lakh 13 thousand and 714 hectares, according to Agriculture Extension Department.

According to official sources, 10,113 hectares of land were brought under the cultivation in Kushtia district against the target of 10,362 hectares, 6,175 hectares against 15, 320 hectares in Jhenidah, 9,230 hectares against 16,295 hectares in



Farmers cultivate jute though they are deprived of its fair price every year. This is due to lack of pragmatic policy of the government. Photo shows: Jute processing going on in full swing somewhere in Kushtia district.

-Star photo

Magura, 10,985 hectares against 10,661 in Meherpur, 11,605 hectares against the target of 11,465 hectares in Chuadanga, 10,332 hectares against the target of 24,024 hectares in Jessor, 3,920 hectares against the target 13,325 hectares in Narail, 365 hectares against 1,424 hectares in Khulna, 331 hectare against 1,194 hectares in Bagerhat and 5,259 hectares against the target of 9,644 hectares in Satkhira.

Meanwhile, BSS from Panchagarh says: Three purchasing centres in the district have so far bought about 2,540 quintals of jute from August 2 against the target of 15,000

quintals. Jute price at the purchasing centres was set at toska variety Tk 857 and white variety Tk 777 per quintal. But the traders are not inclined to bring in jute at the centres for non-payment of outstanding dues. As a result, jute price has declined. In fact, there is hardly any buyer in the rural markets and the growers face problem with jute.

The purchasing centres of Platinum Jute Mills owe Tk 60 lakh to traders for the jute supplied last year. The Bhajanpur purchasing centre has been closed. Only Debiganj centre of Eastern Jute Mills is buying some jute. In the absence of

buyers of domestic mills, informed sources said large quantities of jute are sold to buyers coming from across the border. An unknown quantity of jute is smuggled out every year through the border.

As the jute mills have either closed or turned sick, for golden fibre has now reduced to a problem for the farmers.

Mohammad Yesin, Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department, said jute cultivation in northern districts has declined to one-tenth in last five years. He estimated that jute was cultivated only on 50,000 hectares this year as against 5 lakh hectares five years ago.

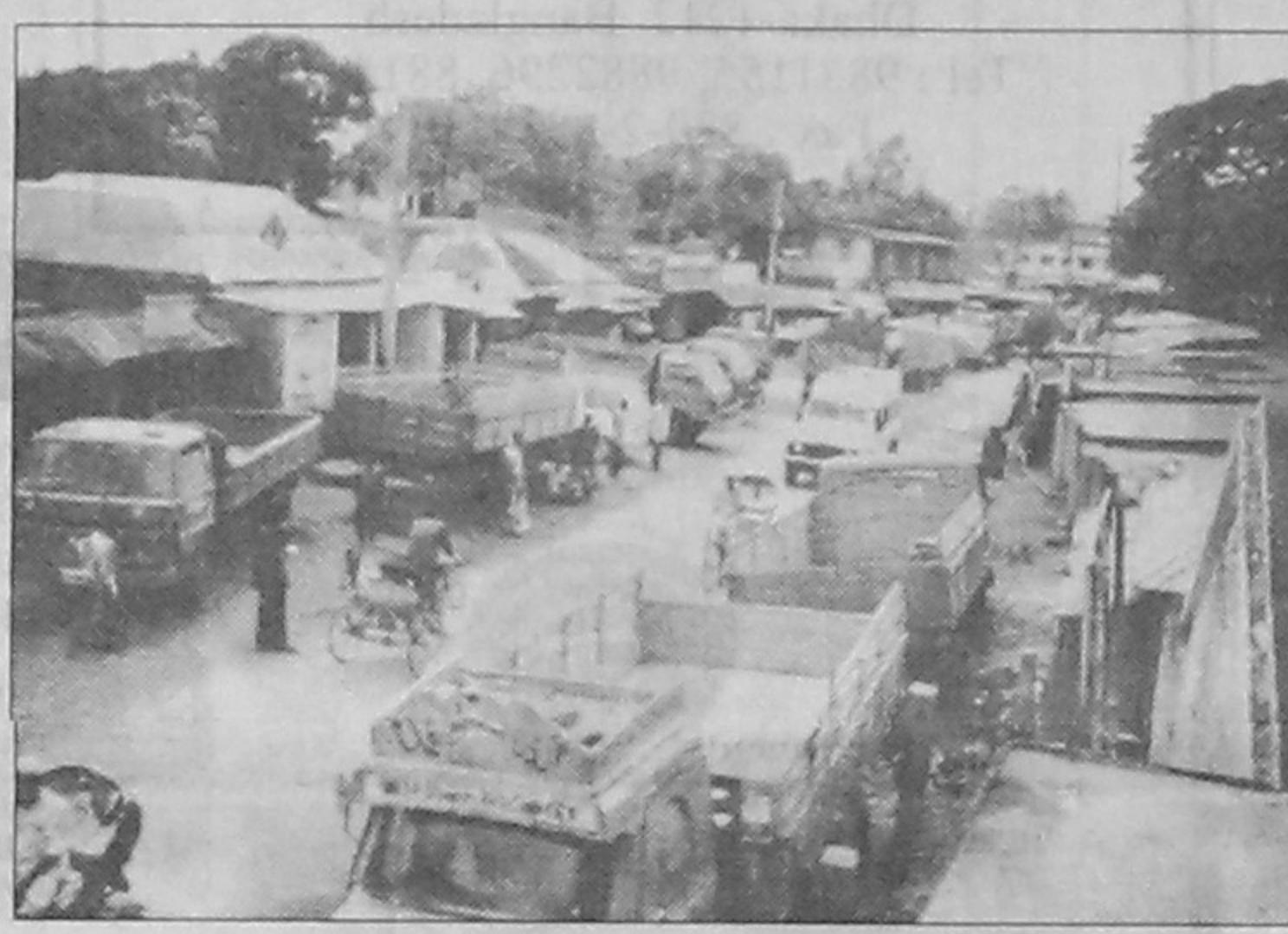
## Sirajganj needs a truck terminal

From Akhteruzzaman Bablu

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 17: Because of absence of a modern truck terminal, the Sirajganj town dwellers have been experiencing a severe traffic congestion.

The problem is getting serious day by day with continued rise in the number of vehicles. The situation has gone worse over the last few years as the town became a district headquarters 18 years ago. Especially, a grim picture is seen on the road from New Dhaka Road, Mujib Sarak and Sirajganj Bazar to Elliot Bridge during the busy hours every day. Trucks in queue remain parked for hours together on these roads causing obstacle for the passers-by as well as for the vehicles plying on the roads. Besides, other vehicles are also seen in the same areas facing no obstruction by any authority or law enforcing agency. These are the main entry points from other districts. Traffic police have to face a lot of problem to control the traffic arrangement.

A number of the truck drivers said that, they had been compelled to park their trucks on the roadside places getting no place anywhere. They did not get any response from the authorities concerned for establishing a terminal for the last few years. The district administration and Sirajganj Municipality have not taken up any programme for establishing a modern truck terminal in the town.



Drivers usually park their vehicles haphazardly in Sirajganj town due to absence of any truck terminal there. This snap was taken from the busy Bazaar Station area situated on New Dhaka road.

-Star photo

## Bus passengers harassed

From Abdul Matin Fakir

Humiliations and indecent treatments by the bus conductors, helpers and drivers over the enhancement of bus fare follow-

ing the recent price rise of petrol and diesel by the government. Sometimes passengers refusing to pay the abnormally enhanced bus fare are reportedly forced to get down from the bus on the way.

After the raising of prices of petroleum and diesel, bus owners have increased bus fare unilaterally and unreasonable rate which the passengers on board the buses refuse to pay resulting in altercations, scuffles, brawls and other untoward incidents between the passengers and the bus employees.

The prices of each litre of petrol has been increased by Taka 2 and that of diesel by Taka 2.55. In view of this increase in fuel prices, bus owners have allegedly been taking Paisa 55 to 60 as against Paisa 30 to 40 per kilometre from each passenger earlier.

At present Taka 25 is being taken from each passenger for travelling a distance of 48-km from Faridpur to Takerhat as against Taka 15 charged earlier. An amount of 20 is now being taken from each passenger in place of Taka 12 taken previously to travel from Faridpur to Sadarup, a distance of only 38-km. Taka 20 per passenger is now being charged as against Taka 12 to travel a distance covering 35-km from Faridpur to Daulatdia. At the same rate bus fare has been increased in different routes of the district causing tremendous hardship to the daily bus passengers.

Reports of untoward incidents over the abnormal enhancement of bus fare have been pouring in at the district headquarters from different parts of the district. According to DAE sources, under the scheme 1000 high yielding variety of mango plants have been produced. The department is also cross-breeding new varieties of jackfruit, guava, palm, lemon and pomegranate plants by grafting those with the high yielding ones.

DAE has also distributed a large number of saplings among the farmers.

## Price of hilsha comes down

BAGERHAT, Sept 17: Price of hilsha fish came down abruptly here on Thursday as fishermen caught huge quantity of the fish during the last 2-3 days in the sea, reports BSS.

First ever reduction of the price was noticed this season with the arrival of 40 trawlers loaded with hilsha here on the day. Each kg hilsha was sold at Tk 50/60. Many enthusiastic customers were seen buying the popular fish following the reduction of its price. Hilsha was sold at Tk 150/160 per kg at the advent of monsoon season due to its acute scarcity.

## Two killed in Jessore

JESSORE, Sept 17: Two people were killed in separate accidents here on Wednesday, reports BSS.

Police said Sobhan Molla, 65, died on spot when a Chowgachha-bound passenger bus knocked him down on Chowgachha-Moheshpur road. Molla hailed from Moheshpur upazila of Jhenidah district. On the same day, an unidentified man, aged about 40, died instantly when he was run over by an Ishwardi-bound train in between Rupdia and Singla rail stations

## Rivals' clash leaves 15 hurt

BAGERHAT, Sept 17: At least 15 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of labourers in Moreljanj upazila on Thursday morning, reports BSS.

Witnesses said the clash between the two groups took place in the upazila headquarters over establishing supremacy. Three of the injured, Hatem Kazi, 25, Belayet, 34, and Nasim -- were admitted to the Moreljanj Thana Health Complex.

## Smuggled goods seized

JESSORE, Sept 17: Members of Bangladesh Rifles seized a huge quantity of smuggled goods, worth about Tk 10.16 crore, from different parts of the district during the last six months till August 31, reports BSS.

A total of 1,053 cases were filed and 35 people arrested during the period. Goods worth over Tk 9.11 crore were recovered while being smuggled out to India and goods valued at Tk 1.04 crore seized while being brought into the country. The seized goods included sarees, ready made garments, medicines, cloths, sugar, salt, jute seeds, phenyl, bicycle and its spare parts, cosmetics, electronic goods, utensils, TV parts, mosquito nets, heroin, hemp, yarns, fruits, fishes, cattle-heads and tortoise shells.

## Shaheed Minar to be built on IU campus

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Sept 17: Islamic University authority has decided to construct a Shaheed Minar on the campus to commemorate martyrs of the Language Movement.

The decision was taken at a recent meeting of IU Advisory Committee with Vice Chancellor Kaysar Ali in chair.

Construction work of the 52-foot memorial will start soon, university sources said.

## Horticulture programme

SHERPUR, Sept 17: The government has taken up an extensive scheme for the development of horticulture here in this fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to DAE sources, under the scheme 1000 high yielding variety of mango plants have been produced. The department is also cross-breeding new varieties of jackfruit, guava, palm, lemon and pomegranate plants by grafting those with the high yielding ones.

DAE has also distributed a large number of saplings among the farmers.

## 10 injured as transport workers clash

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 17: At least 10 people were injured and 25 auto tempoos were damaged in a clash between two groups of transport workers at Rupatali Bus Stand here recently. Reason of the clash could not be known.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Following the clash plying of tempoos vehicles on Rupatali-Nathullabpur route remained suspended for hours, causing sufferings to hundreds of passengers.

## News snaps



Blacksmiths of Magura district have been facing hard days now. This is due to poverty, shortage of capital and patronisation from the government and other non-governmental organisations.

-Star photo

## New administrator

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Sept 17: Prof Mahbubur Rahman of History Department has been made administrator of Public Relation Office of the university.

Vice Chancellor Prof Sayeedur Rahman appointed him for a three-year term. Prof Rahman, who took over on September 6, replaced Prof Faruk-uz-Zaman.

## 291 schemes implemented

GOPALGANJ, Sept 17: A total of 291 schemes were implemented in Mukundpur upazila in fiscal 1999-2000 under Food for Works and Test Relief programmes, reports BSS.

Official sources said a total of 1163.66 tons of wheat were spent to implement the schemes. Of these, 72 were completed under FFW programme while the rest 219 under TR programme. The works included construction and reconstruction of rural roads, earth filling in different educational institutions, repair of roads and bridges and renovation of mosques and sawmills.

## Production starts in full swing

MADARIPUR, Sept 17: Production in 43 industrial units here has started in full swing, reports BSS.

About 500 workers including 50 women are working in the units set up by BSCIC on eight acres of land costing Tk 1.42 crore on the bank of the Arial Khan river near the town in 1985. There are some 123 plots in the industrial estate where 17 industrial units are also under construction. The industrial units include cold storage, flour, pulse, oil, chanchur and soap factories and sawmills.

## Workshop

COMILLA, Sept 17: An orientation workshop on 'Advocacy on reproductive health and gender issues' was held at Comilla Shishu Academy recently, reports BSS.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and Development) Yunusur Rahman was present as the chief guest. District Information Officer M Jasimuddin presided over the workshop. District Information Office organised the workshop. Twenty districts participated in the workshop.



Abdul Hannan Khan, Additional DIG of police recently planted a sapling at Zamtol Bazaar in Netrakona district as part of an afforestation programme -- 2000 organised by Arthonotile Manobik Unnayan Sangstha, a non-governmental organisation.

-Star photo

## Tender Notice

সময়মতো সঠিক বিদ্যুৎ বিল পরিশোধ করুন  
সরকারকে ফাঁকি দেয়ার প্রবন্ধ বৃক্ষ করুন

Sealed tenders in T-2 forms are invited from Ka, Kha, Ga categories licence holders and enlisted with Power Development Board for supply of goods at an estimated expenditure of Tk 42510 for various Grid Substations under Grid Maintenance Division, PDB, Comilla. Detailed tender schedule will be available on written permission from head of offices concerned from the offices mentioned below till 2.10.2000 on payment of Tk 40.00.

1. Chief Engineer, Transmission, No-1, Abdul Ghani Road, Biddul Bhaban, Dhaka.

2. Superintending Engineer, Grid Circle, PDB, Sylhet Camp Office, Srimongal.

3. Manager, Sonali Bank, WAPDA Bhaban Branch, Zangalia, Comilla.

Tenders will be received in the undermentioned offices on 3.10.2000 till 12 Noon and will be opened the same day at 12-30 PM before the tenderers present (if anyone remains present).

1. Chief Engineer, Transmission, PDB, No