

**National**

# Chowgacha Bailey Bridge in dilapidated condition

**From Our Correspondent**

JESSORE, Jan 20: Chowgacha Bailey Bridge across the river Kapadak under Chowgacha upazila is in dilapidated condition. It has been posing threat of accident to the passers-by. Continued negligence and lack of maintenance by the department concerned, has made this situation.

According to reports, rear and approach slabs of the bridge have



Pedestrians and cyclists are standing outside the bridge to make way for a passenger bus to pass through the Chowgacha Bailey Bridge. ---Star photo

been displaced and a number of nuts, bolts and screws pilfered from railings of the bridge rendering it quiet loose and slack.

It may collapse without forewarning.

It is further reported that when a small cart, may be a rickshaw or van, not to speak of heavy vehicle, moves through the bridge trembles and jumps, creating horrible sounds.

It is learnt, the bridge is too

After the liberation war of 1971, the then communications minister Shahid Capt Monsur Ali went on a visit to Moheshpur in Jhenidah through this way accompanied by the local MP Moinuddin Miazai in 1972.

He halted here for sometime and considering topographical importance of the place, ordered for construction of Calendar Hamilton bridge here at once.

Suddenly the work was

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# Production of Rajshahi Sugar Mills may come to a halt

## Sugarcane crisis continues

**From Abdul Wadood**

stopped and the project abandoned under order of the GOC, Jessoro Cantonment in 1976. It was then shifted to Arpara Shimakhalia on Jessoro-Magura road under Shalika upazila in Magura.

After Upazila Parishad came into being in 1985, the project was taken up with the communications ministry and the communications secretary Hosen Toufig Imam with no objection from the GOC, Jessoro Cantonment Maj. Gen. Harun Ahmed Chowdhury, ordered the Roads and Highways Department to construct a Bailey bridge at the earliest.

Incidentally, Chowgacha bridge connects Jessoro, Khulna and Sathkhira districts with Chuadanga, Meherpur, Kushtia and part of Jhenidah districts via the North Bengal via Paksey directly reducing the distance, shortening time with less cost.

If the Bailey bridge is replaced by a re-bridge of 16-feet wide, it will ensure easy movement of vehicles side by side to boost commercial trade and promote economic condition in the region.

People of Chowgacha and its adjoining areas urge the state Minister for Planning to please look into the matter and take necessary action to address the problem in greater regional and national interest.

It is needless to mention here that the present government has already constructed eight largest bridges and over one hundred major bridges all over the country after it took over the charge in 1996.

The mills now cannot run for 24 hours due to short supply of sugarcane and authorities may stop sugar production much before the schedule.

RSM authorities had fixed a target to produce 12,640 metric tons of sugar by crushing 1,60 lakh metric tons of sugarcane during the current season. But so far the mills have produced only about 5,800 metric tons of sugar so far in 66 days from November 19 last year when the crushing began. During the period, about 93,000 metric tons of sugarcane have been crushed.

Sugarcane was cultivated on about 15,400 acres of land in the mill zone area during the current season. Bumper production of sugarcane was recorded in the season. The total production of sugarcane in the mill zone area was estimated at about 3 lakh metric tons, RSM sources said.

But the farmers are not supplying their products to the mills. 30 out of total 62 sugarcane

purchasing centres had already been closed, as sugarcane was not supplied there. The rest 32 purchasing centres are also limping.

Price of sugarcane fixed by the RSM is Tk 4 per maund (about 40kg). But farmers are selling sugarcane to molasses producers. The growers say they get high prices from molasses producers. Besides, there is no hassle or delay in getting money from the molasses producers, they added.

Molasses are produced by crushing sugarcane in indigenous and power crushers. Although operation of power crushers in mill zone area is prohibited, more than 1200 power crushers are in operation in the mill zone area this season, taking a huge toll on Rajshahi Sugar Mills.

More over, some 800 crushers pushed by bullocks are also in operation. The large numbers of indigenous crushers are also posing threat to the mills.

The farmers are interested either in selling sugarcane to the molasses producers or they themselves are producing molasses, locally known as gur. Molasses

brings more profit to them.

Large numbers of power crushers and indigenous crushers are now in operation in remote areas of Bagha, Charchhat, Putthia and Paba upazilas of Rajshahi district. A large number of people including females are employed in crushing sugarcane and producing gur.

RSM authorities with the help of police and upazila administration every year try to stop the operation of power crushers, but they ultimately fail in the face of resistance from local people.

# News snaps

## Man arrested from Shimultali

GAZIPUR, Jan 20: Police arrested a man from a house at Shimultali in Joydebpur on Monday night on charge of looting police camp, reports UNB.

The accused was identified as Jalal Ahmed alias Dulal of Tangail district. He has long been absconding, police said. Acting on a tip-off, police raided the area and arrested him from the rented-house of his brother. A gang of hoodlums looted firearms and ammunition from Zawkor police camp in Rajbari district on February 8 last year.

## IRRI-Boro farming on 22,000 hectares

MEHERPUR, Jan 20: A total of 22,000 hectares in the Meherpur district in this Rabi session, reports BSS.

According to an official source, 7,500 hectares will be brought under cultivation in Meherpur Sadar, 7,500 hectares in Gangni and 7,000 hectares in Mujib Nagar upazilas. BADC already supplied 12 tons of IRRI-Boro seeds among the farmers. A total of 6,200 shallow tube-wells and 35 deep tube-wells will also be installed to supply irrigation water in IRRI-Boro lands. Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation will sell 2,575 tons of different varieties of fertilisers among the farmers.

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# Dharla Bridge work in full swing

**From A Correspondent**

KURIGRAM, Jan 20: The construction work of the Dharla Bridge over the Dharla river under Kurigram Sadar upazila is going on in full swing.

The construction work of the 648-metre long bridge was started in February last year at a cost of Tk 98 crore. Construction of the bridge will be completed by 2003, official sources said.

Meanwhile, 30 per cent work of the bridge have already been completed. Official sources further said, a box culvert on Kurigram side, 100 per cent



The construction work of Dharla Bridge near Kurigram town is going on in full swing. ---Star photo

# Massive landless rehab programme in CHT

**From A Correspondent**

BANDARBAN, Jan 20: A massive rehabilitation programme for landless and seasonal tribal cultivators, with housing, orchard and mixed fruit garden facilities, has been taken up by Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board in CHT region at a cost of Taka nine crore and 36 lakh.

Five hundred tribal landless and seasonal cultivator families including the families who were farming poppy are included in the rehabilitation programme. The programme has been taken up in Ruma and Jhanchi Upazilla of Bandarban district and Sajek valley in Baghaichari upazilla of Rangamati district.

Each family will be provided with three acres and 25 decimals of land in hills. Financial, housing, equipment, sapling and technology facilities will be available for living and making orange garden and orchard by the families. Every family will get taka 1000 in

each month for a scheduled time for living.

Bir Bahadur, MP, Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board said a proposal for rehabilitation of 300 more landless tribal families in Khagrachari district has been prepared to be included in this programme and sent to the concerning ministry for approval. In this regard the amount will be increased simultaneously.

Executive Engineer Satyavati Chawdhury stated that first phase tender for housing facilities of the project was called and the work is going on.

Nursery with two lakh orange sapling and one lakh twenty-five thousand coffee sapling is being prepared.

The programme started in 2000-2001 fiscal and will end by the year 2004.

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# Atpara Health Officer manhandled

**From Our Correspondent**

NETRAKONA, Jan 20: Local people of Atpara upazila beat the Upazila Health Officer (UHO) Dr. Jahiruddin and doctors of Atpara Upazila Health Complex recently.

People became angry over the death of Michir Ali, 57, Upazila Engineer of Atpara upazila.

Michir Ali became ill suddenly when staffers of his office asked the doctors of Atpara Upazila Health Complex for his proper treatment. But none



Former Chief Advisor of the Caretaker Government and ex-Chief Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman speaking as the chief guest at the installation ceremony of the office-bearers of Sylhet Press Club in Sylhet last week. ---Star photo

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