

Sonamasjid Customs Station earns Tk 22cr in 3 months

Full-fledged land port demanded

UNB, Lalmonirhat

Sonamasjid Customs Station in Chapainawabganj district collected Tk 22 crore in revenue in three months, breaking its previous records.

Sonamasjid, the largest customs station of northern region, had targeted to collect Tk 6 crore every month but it realised Tk 6.63 crore in January, Tk 7.05 crore in February and Tk 8.10 crore in March, surpassing the target by Tk 3.79 crore.

Set up in 1991-92 fiscal, the customs station earned highest amount of Tk 54.90 crore in revenue in 1999-2000 fiscal followed by Tk 7.27 crore in 1993-94.

Export-import through the customs station has marked a substantial rise since the commissioning of Bangabandhu Bridge.

If the present trend continues, said an official, the revenue collection from the station will hit Tk 72 crore this fiscal.

An importer said the amount of revenue collection will go up further if administrative hassles and other problems in import-export through the station can be removed.

He said there is no bank branch in the station for

which the businesspeople are facing various hazards.

In the face of demand by local exporters and C&F Agents Association, Finance Minister Shah AM S Kibria, visiting the Custom Station two years ago, had assured the businessmen of opening a bank branch there.

But there is no sign in sight to set up any bank branch there. Besides, the longstanding demand of the local people to make the customs station into a full-fledged land port still remains a far cry.

What worries the businesspeople most is that there is no warehouse, telephone and postal facilities. Even it has no rest house and medical centre.

In most cases, the authorities have to store imported goods under open sky.

Abdur Rashid and Samiul Haq Liton, president and general secretary respectively of the C&F Agent Association, said the Sonamasjid Customs Station is contributing highest amount of revenue compared to nine other stations of the northern region, but it has not seen development for a long time.

They urged the government to immediately declare the customs station a full-fledged land port considering its potentials.

Monument yet to be built in memory of a 'Bir Shrestha'

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Three decades have passed after the independence, but no monument has yet been constructed in memory of the highest gallantry

award winner Bir Shrestha Capt Mohiuddin Jahangir.

Capt Mohiuddin Jahangir sacrificed his life for the freedom of the motherland on the eve of independence on December 14, 1971.

In the early hours of December 14, Capt Jahangir along with his co-fighters swooped on the Pakistan occupation forces at Rehaichar, on the outskirts of the town, and captured their bunkers one after another.

During the fierce hand-to-hand fight, an enemy bullet suddenly hit him leaving him dead on the spot at 9 am. Later on, he was buried at Sonamasjid premises according to his last wish.

Although a bridge over the Mahananda River was named after Bir Shrestha Jahangir, no monument was set up at the place where he embraced martyrdom.

District Muktiyoddha Sangsad and Bir Shrestha Jahangir College had jointly took an initiative to construct a mausoleum here. Jahangir's father Abdul Moteleb Hawlader formally laid the foundation stone of the monument on June 2, 1999.

The then State Minister for Water Resources Dr Alauddin, Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali MP and local freedom fighters and political leaders were present on the occasion.

However, the construction work on the monument could not be started due to complexity over land and non-cooperation of the then district administration and local political leaders.

District Muktiyoddha Sangsad Commander Raziur Rahman told that work on the monumental could not be started as Roads and Highways Department did not release the land where foundation stone was laid two years ago.

A letter was sent to the concerned ministry seeking permission to set up the monument on the place, he said.

Local people also urged the government to take necessary steps in order to set up the monument on the place where the valiant freedom fighter sacrificed his precious life.



PHOTO: Delwar Kabir

Members of Jhenidah Reporters' Unity in collaboration with political workers, social workers, cultural activists, school and college teachers, businessmen and workers of development organisations formed a human chain in Jhenidah town last week in protest against the rising trend of attack on newsmen throughout the country. Later on the participants submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Commissioner of Jhenidah to take effective measures to help journalists perform their professional duties.

RU teacher dismissed on charge of moral turpitude

RU CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University authorities dismissed a teacher of the university on the ground of moral turpitude on Monday.

The syndicate of the university took the decision after Muhammad Abdus Salam, an assistant professor of Library and Information Science Department, was found guilty.

Earlier, a four-member probe committee headed by Professor Abdul Halim, constituted in the syndicate session held on September 26, 1999, had submitted its report to the syndicate.

The teacher was suspended on October 10, 1998 by the then Vice

Chancellor Prof Abdul Khaleque following a written allegation by four teachers of the same department that Abdus Salam, the then Chairman of the department, got three first year (honours) students admitted into the department in 1998 by manipulating their test scripts.

The university authorities also formed a four-member probe committee on October 12, 1998 headed by Professor Sohrab Ali, to investigate into the allegation. The committee found him guilty of corruption and moral turpitude.

The university syndicate in an 'extra-ordinary session' accepted the report and formed another probe committee on September 26, 1999

headed by Professor Abdul Halim for re-investigation.

The university syndicate in its August 27-28, 2000 session formed another committee, headed by syndicate member Professor Chowdhury Julfikar Matin, to decide the fate of the probe report.

The committee then asked Abdus Salam to answer to the show cause notice that why he would not be dismissed from his job.

The May 5-6, 2001 syndicate session found the teacher's answer 'totally unacceptable' and rejected his claim of innocence. The syndicate also ordered the registrar of the university to terminate the teacher from service accordingly.

15,000 children not enrolled in Jamalpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

The government's efforts to ensure basic education for all have virtually failed to yield positive results, as some 15,000 children in Jamalpur district do not attend schools.

According to a survey conducted by some local NGOs, the children aged between 8 and 15, who are not enrolled, are working in different restaurants, brick kilns, garages and engineering workshops in the district. Besides, many more in urban areas pull rickshaws and rickshaw-vans to support their families.

A teacher of a local private college said the government's compulsory primary education programme yields little results, as poor parents show reluctance to send their wards

to schools.

He said although child labour is banned world-wide as per the United Nations declaration, it is rising everyday in the district and these children are mostly from underprivileged families.

There is also "Food for Education Programme" aimed at ensuring smooth enrolment of the underprivileged children. However, the programme cannot check the dropout, said some local people.

When asked, a headmaster of a school in the town said it is not possible to eradicate child labour and ensure basic education for all by government's endeavour alone.

United effort is needed to make the Total Literacy Movement (TLM), a literacy campaign launched by the government, a success, he added.

Ten-year-old Sohel, who works at a tea stall at Fulbaria in the town said, "I want to go to school but my parents have forced me to work as my father cannot not maintain our ten-member family with his small income".

However, eleven years old Seraj of Pirgalhati village under Sadar upazila is defying all odds. He goes to school in the morning and pulls rickshaw in the afternoon. His father, who has always been in severe financial crisis, cannot provide education to his children.

Salim, a student of class five at Fatahpur Primary School, said, "I have to pull rickshaw because my father is unable to maintain our family".

Two killed in Sirajganj road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Two people were killed and 50 others injured when a bus hit another bus on the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge in Sirajganj early hours on Thursday.

According to police, the accident occurred after a Bogra-bound bus hit a Rangpur-bound bus from behind near the pillar number nine at 2.45am.

The dead could not be identified. No damage was done to the bridge.

A case was filed with Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station. Both the vehicles were seized.

Workshop on mushroom cultivation

BSS, Thakurgaon

A day-long workshop on production, preservation and use of mushroom was held at the training centre of the Directorate of Agriculture Extension in Thakurgaon recently.

The workshop was jointly organised by Directorate of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and the Directorate of Women's Affairs. It was inaugurated by Fatema Begum, superintendent of police, Thakurgaon.

The workshop was presided over by Pkisy Najnin, Women's Affairs' Officer of Thakurgaon. Abdus Salam, deputy director, DAE was present at the workshop as special guest.

Thirty housewives interested in mushroom cultivation took part in the workshop.

NEWS SNAPS

Lightning kills seven

UNB, Habiganj

Seven people were killed in separate incidents of lightning in Habiganj district in six days ending Monday.

The dead were identified as Kalam, 45, Jamat Ali, 50, Samadullah, 40, of Baniachang, Abani Namasudra, 40, of Nabiganj, Abdul Ali, 30, of Madhabpur, Rafiq, 40, of Azmiriganj and an unidentified youth of Chunarughat upazila. Hospital sources said Kalam, Jamat Ali and Samadullah died Monday while Abani Namasudra last week, Abdul Ali Thursday and Rafiq Wednesday.

Two sisters drown

UNB, Naogaon

Two sisters drowned while taking bath in a river at village Nazirpur in Patnitala upazila in Naogaon district on May 4.

According to a delayed report, Rebeka Sultana, 14, and Rashna Sultana, 10, daughters of Yusuf Chowdhury, drowned in the Atrai River. Villagers later recovered their bodies. A pall of gloom descended on the village as the sad news spread around.

UNO, AC (land) assaulted

UNB, Chapainawabganj

The officers of Sadar upazila were assaulted at Bararashia village in Chapainawabganj on Wednesday.

UNO Faruq Jali and AC (land) Mohammad Aminul Islam went to visit a 'khas' land in the village where an Adarsha Gram (ideal village) would be set up. But Mafijul Islam and Waliur Rahman of the village claimed that they are the owners of the 'khas' land. At one stage of their exchange of words, a group of terrorists led by Islam and Rahman attacked them and damaged the motorcycle of AC (land). The AC (land) filed a case against Mafijul Islam and Waliur Rahman under Public Safety Act (PSA) with Sadar police Thursday.

Separate incidents kill 3 in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Three people died in three separate incidents in Rajshahi district on Wednesday. One young boy named Mamun, 17, son of Anwarul Islam of Dhansuba village under Chapainawabgonj district, who was injured seriously in a road accident succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) early Wednesday morning. Tanore police recovered the body of one young man named Hasem, 32, of Keshar village under Nachole upazila of Chapainawabgonj district, from a canal at Nariul village under Tanore thana on Wednesday. Several marks of injuries were found in his body. Police suspected that the young man might have been killed by some one a few days ago. Another 30-year old man named Sohrab of Shahapara village under Paba thana committed suicide by taking poison recently.

Fake principal arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

CID police of Rajshahi on Thursday morning arrested Shamsul Haque, Principal of Tanon College under Mohanpur thana in Rajshahi district.

Police also recovered many fake certificates and other examination related documents from his possession from his residence in Chhoto Bangram area under Boalia thana in Rajshahi city. Acting of a tip-off, CID police led by ASP Sathiya Ranzan Roy raided the principal's residence at about 2:30 am on Thursday and recovered 2,000 fake certificates, testimonials, admit cards, registration cards and mark sheets of Rajshahi Education Board, Rajshahi University and National University. Police also seized many certificate making papers and materials from his residence. Shamsul Haque in his confessional statement said that he became principal of the Tanon College producing fake certificates. He also revealed that he was making fake certificates and distributing those among students for about seven years with help of a section of employees of Rajshahi Education Board and two universities. The arrested person was handed over to Boalia thana. A case was recorded with Boalia thana in this connection.

Goods worth Tk 3 lakh burnt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Goods worth about Taka 3 lakh have been reduced to ashes in a devastating fire at Piripur village under Godagari upazila in Rajshahi district on Wednesday.

Local people said the fire originated from short circuit in the house of Abdul Samad. The fire engulfed the adjacent houses within a couple of minutes. Damaged goods include computer, colour TV, 50 maunds of rice and money. Fire Brigade teams from Rajshahi and Godagari rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control later on.

Four get life term

UNB, Panchagarh

A young man and his three accomplices have been sentenced to life term in jail by a court in Panchagarh for killing his father.

The court also fined Abdullah and his accomplices Sirajul Islam, Mostafa and Abdul Gani Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more in jail. Abdullah was also sentenced to three years imprisonment and fined Tk 1000, in default, to suffer three months more RI for concealing the dead body. According to the prosecution, Abdullah aided by his three friends killed his father Ahmed Ali on August 8, 1994 over a land dispute and dumped the body into Indian territory. Police later recovered the body through a flag meeting between BDR and BSF. After examining the records and witnesses, the District and Sessions Judge on April 20 handed down the judgement.

Six robbers arrested

UNB, Pabna

Police arrested six members of an organised gang of inter-district robbers from Sonapattii in Pabna town Sunday night.

The law enforcers also recovered four mobile phone sets, one taxicab and some sharp weapons from their possession. The arrested were identified as Borhan Uddin, Julhas, Selim and Mostafa of Madaripur district and Tito and Abul Hashem of Barisal district. Police said three teams were formed to nab them on Friday after they received a message from Dhaka that the bandits came here to commit robbery. During interrogation, the robbers confessed that they had a plan to commit robbery in jewelry shops in Pabna and Swardi. They had been wanted for long in connection with a number of robbery cases, Kotwali thana OC Emdadul Haq said.

Four phone exchanges go digital

BSS, Barisal

Four analogue telephone exchanges were transformed into digital system in Barisal division last week.

According to officials, Jhalakathi and Pirojpur district and Agailihara upazila were brought under 3,000 lines digital system. Banaripara upazila was brought under 256 lines digital exchanges.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer of village Chandipur under Sailkupa upazila in Jhenidah district takes care of maize plants which he has cultivated as part of post-flood rehabilitation programme undertaken up by local Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE). Maize cultivation has gained popularity in the district in recent days.