

Eight-year-old deadlock ends Land requisition for Rajshahi Silk Industrial City okayed

ABDUL WADOOD, Rajshahi

The proposed Rajshahi Silk Industrial City (RSIC) is going to be established after over eight years' deadlock. Sources in Bangladesh Sericulture Board (BSB) and Rajshahi Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office said, the project proposal has been finalised. An order for land requisition has been issued early this month. In response to the demand of silk farmers from early 1992, former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia announced that a silk industrial city would be established in Rajshahi. Accordingly, the cabinet took a decision the same year. The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved Taka 8.40 crore project in 1994. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) had been

assigned to implement the project. Later, the assignment had been transferred to BSB. About 27 acres of land situated behind Rajshahi Textile Mills in Bara Bangram of the city, had been chosen for the proposed RSIC. But the land could not be requisitioned due to lack of approval of the central land allotment Committee (CLAC) of the concerned ministry. Land Requisition Department of the DC's office said that they had received the final order of land requisition for the proposed RSIC this month. An amount of Taka 2.00 crore have been allocated for the purpose. Process of land requisition will begin very soon. According to the project proposal there will be 138 plots in the silk industrial city. Out of the total, 68 plots will be used for silk factories.

Poor price frustrates Boro farmers in N districts

BSS, Bogra

Bumper production of Boro paddy has been achieved in the northern districts this year. But poor farmers are deprived of fair price as they are forced to sell their produce at a cheaper rate. According to market sources, each maund of Boro is being sold between Taka 170 to Taka 230 in different districts of the region. Half-dried paddy at Kahalu market is being sold between Taka 170 to Taka 200 per maund. In Joypurhat, Naogaon and Dinajpur districts good quality dried paddy per maund is Taka 230 only. Paddy sellers are crowding in the big village markets like Gopinathpur, Molamari, Punat, Etakhola of Joypurhat and Ronbagha, Omarpur of Bogra. But they receive very little response.

As supply of paddy is more than demands, most of the farmers have to sell their products at a much cheaper rate. Poor peasants are not getting access to government food godowns. A Food Department official in Bogra, on condition of anonymity, said food procurement at an official godown at Kahalu upazila was suspended due to undue pressure of an influential quarter. It is also alleged that a government godown in Fulbari upazila in Dinajpur was filled up with paddy from identified middlemen even before the start of official rice procurement drive. "Massive paddy cultivation is responsible for huge loss in this season," echoed many northern farmers like Abu Hena, Mujibur Rahman, Abdul Jaill, Khaleq,

Rimu, Farid Ali, Mohabbat Ali and Shafiqul Islam. They said it would have been profitable if it was Taka 250 per maund (dried paddy) and Taka 230 per maund (wet paddy). The situation is similar in Naogaon where market price of per maund paddy is Taka 170 to Taka 210. According to official estimate, rice production was targeted at seven lakh metric tons, but the production reached ten and a half lakh metric tons, more than the target. Most of the farmers in Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabganj, Pabna, Sirajganj, Bogra, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh are not getting access to the official godowns due to illegal interference of the middlemen and vested interested groups, local people



Jhenidah Post Office area in Jhenidah town remains clogged, waterlogged even after moderate rains due to faulty drainage system. But who cares?

Sirajganj DIARY

Bomb manufacturing factory detected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Sirajganj Sadar Police recently detected a bomb manufacturing factory and arrested owner of the factory. Police also seized 300 grams of Indian bomb manufacturing raw materials from his procession in Kalibari area of Sirajganj town. Acting on a tip-off Sadar thana police led by Sub-Inspector Abdul Jaill raided the area and arrested factory owner Abdur Rahid, 35, son of Abdul Kuddus of Koal Gayla in Sirajganj town with bomb manufacturing raw materials from his shop. The arrested person confessed to police that he has been engaged in such an illegal activity for a long time and has been supplying bombs to members of various political parties and anti socials.

200 nabbed
Sirajganj Police arrested 200 people including three listed criminals in three days of special police drive recently. Separate cases have been filed with the concerned police stations against the arrested persons.

Ordeals of a poor girl

UNB, Sylhet

Jamal Ahmed offered love and proposed to marry Hajera Khatun in a bid to win the heart of the beautiful girl.

Daughter of a poor neighbour, she could not refuse his repeated offer of love and marriage, nor resist the temptation of a happy life with Jamal. She agreed and met him secretly on several occasions to make love. In the process, Hajera conceived and gave birth to a son. But Jamal would not keep his words, may be under pressure of his rich parents and disowned the son.

For six years, Hajera is living with his son in utter distress. She moved door to door and even to the court. But everywhere luck and society betrayed her.

Sajal Das, president of Sylhet divisional branch of Bangladesh Human Rights Foundation, was moved by her ordeals. Recently, he assured her of all legal assistance to seek redress of her plight.

According to her written complaint to the Foundation, Hajera often shared bed with Jamal from March to November 1995 believing in his solemn pledge to marry her. But after the birth of his son in December, Jamal forgot his commitment and stopped meeting her.

Abdul Mumin, the poor father of Hajera, moved door to door for justice. Finally, he filed a case with Zakiganj police against Jamal. On investigation, police prosecuted Jamal for betraying the innocent girl. And the magistrate court issued warrant of arrest against Jamal.

But soon came the village leaders to rescue Jamal, the son of their own class. Kajalshah UP chairman Saber Ahmed, and Emdadur Rahman and Makhan Mia of Kamalpur area initiated a settlement.

They called an arbitration meeting that decided that Jamal would accept Hajera as his wife and also the son, give her Tk 100,000 in dowry while registering the marriage, immediately pay her Tk 2,500 and the case against Jamal would be withdrawn.

When the case was withdrawn, Jamal forgot everything and declined to obey the decisions of the arbitration meeting.

Hajera went to the village leaders, but they would not listen to her. She again went to Zakiganj thana magistrate and sought redress of her grievance.

The magistrate issued warrant of arrest against Jamal. After remaining a fugitive for a long time, he surrendered before the court in November 1997. He was thrown into jail hajat, but after 20 days he managed to come out on bail.

The court may have resolved her problem, giving a verdict in her favour. But the 'Muhuri' (clerk) of the lawyer engaged by Hajera to represent her in court, gave her wrong dates of hearing of the case, ostensibly being heavily bribed by Jamal. As a result, she did not appear in the court on the dates of hearing. And the magistrate finally dismissed the case, apparently to her utter surprise.

NEWS SNAPS

Lightning claims three

UNB, Chapainawabganj

At least three people were killed and five injured in lightning in Chapainawabganj district during the last month. Witnesses said two brothers Zahidul, 35 and Saidul, 37, of village Dhumani Nagar in Shibganj upazila while returning home from their boro paddy field were struck by thunderstorm killing Zaidul on the spot and injuring the other seriously on May 16. A little boy identified as Waliul, 10, of village Madhabpur in Nachol upazila died and four others were injured in lightning on the same day while collecting mango from a mango garden.

Three killed in liquor tragedy

UNB, Panchagarh

Three people, including a UP chairman, died allegedly after taking rectified spirit in Debiddar upazila of Panchagarh district recently. According to a delayed report, chairman of Jorabari union Mohammad Akbar Ali and two others fell sick after taking rectified spirit on the night of May 25. The UP chairman was admitted to Debiddar Hospital immediately after the incident, but he died the next day. The two others identified as Mukul, an employee of Debiddar Agricultural Research and Seed Production Centre, and Sundar Lal of Upen Chouthi Ashrayan died at their respective houses. There have been allegations that local police were playing hide-and-seek with the incident. When asked over phone, Deputy Commissioner Aftab Hasan said that they were not aware of such an incident.

Schoolgirl stabbed to death

UNB, Noakhali

A schoolgirl was stabbed to death by a youth at Dharmapur village in Sebagh upazila Thursday. The victim was identified as Sajeda Akter, 16, a Class X student. Police said Mohammad Hanif, 25, a next-door-neighbour of Sajeda, stabbed her as she refused his love offer. She later succumbed to her injuries on way to Sadar Hospital.

Noakhali road mishap kills one

UNB, Noakhali

A man was killed and six others were injured in a road accident in Begumganj upazila on Noakhali-Chowmuhani road Saturday. Hospital sources said the accident took place at about 9:30 am when a private car dashed an auto-rickshaw leaving seven people including two passerby injured. Six of the injured admitted to Noakhali General Hospital where Swapan, 25, succumbed to his injuries on the day.

Fertilisers pose a threat to environment

UNB, Rangamati

Unplanned application of fertilisers and pesticides on croplands in Rangamati district has been threatening the existence of different species of animals and birds. A local agronomist said most of the growers have no basic knowledge of proper application of chemical fertilisers and pesticides on cropland, which is also posing a threat to environment. Rainwater washed the chemicals from the land to different water bodies causing outbreak of fish diseases. A number of species of fish have already disappeared due to contamination of water, he added.

Trees looted

UNB, Bogra

Most of the 1.70 lakh trees planted on both sides of Bogra-Natore Highway during the last five years by local forest department were looted by the muggers. Forest officials said various species of trees by the side of the 35-km highway from Shakpakha in the downtown to the Natore border were planted at a cost of Tk 2.50 lakh during the period. They said 4,800 saplings in 1982-'83, 7,200 each in '83-'84, '84-'85 and '86-'87, and 1.44 lakh in '85-'86 were planted under community forestry project. An agreement was also signed with the local people to take care of the trees who were also entitled to get 55 per cent of the sale proceeds of the trees, they added.

Sirajganj BCL leader expelled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A local leader of the ruling Awami League backed student wing Bangladesh Chattr League (BCL) has been expelled due to alleged involvement in terrorism activities. Ariful Islam, assistant general secretary of Government Sirajganj

University College Students' Union allegedly demanded Taka 500 as toll from an assistance professor of the college on May 13. When he refused to pay the toll then Arif threatened to kill him. The teacher lodged a case against the BCL leader. Later, police arrested him

and sent to the Jail custody with one month detention. Afterwards, leaders of the college students' union met at a meeting which had been chaired by principal of the college and president of the students' union Tusher Kumar Bhadra. After discussion they expelled Arif.

Boro harvesting going on in full swing



PHOTO: STAR

Magura farmers are now busy in harvesting new Boro paddy. Various stages from crop cutting to drying in mill are shown here. (Top L-R) Farmers are cutting ripe paddy from a land, while two others are seen carrying their produce on head and some others are loading a bullock cart with paddy. (Bottom L-R) A farmer is thrashing paddy, while three housewives are winnowing harvested paddy and finally mill workers are drying paddy at the open space of a rice mill.

Tributes paid to Orderland

BSS, Rajshahi

Rich tributes were paid to W A S Orderland for his contributions to the Bangladesh War of Liberation at a meeting held in Rajshahi University on Saturday. Orderland is the only foreigner who was awarded the title of 'Bir Pratik.' He died on May 18 last in a hospital of Perth, Australia.

The commemorative meeting was presided over by Mansur Ahmed Khan, Commander of Rajshahi University Unit Command of Muktiyoddah Sangsad. Prof Sayedur Rahman Khan, Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University, was the chief speaker.

Prof Khan said the great freedom fighter had taken risk of life by giving shelter, pass information and keep arms of the Freedom Fighters. He also took part in armed actions against Pakistani occupational forces. The Bengali nation will always remember with gratitude his contributions, Prof Khan said.

The meeting was also addressed by Pro VC Prof Wazed Ali, commander (in-charge) of zila command Farhad Ali Miesah, commander of Boalia thana command Mohammad Ali Kamal, Prof Sadequ Arefin, Prof Hasibul Alam Pradhan and Prof M Nurullah.

Abducted teenage girl rescued

BSS, Satkhira

Satkhira Sadar police rescued a teen-aged girl from kidnapers from Polashpole area in Satkhira town on Tuesday.

Sadar police raided the house of Jalal Gazi in Polashpole area and rescued Sholika Rani Mondal, 16, daughter of Ranjit Mandol, from the house. She was allegedly kidnapped by Subhash, Shantosh, Moslem and Ganga Mondol of village Shoruppur under Assasuni upazila on May 26. A case was filed with Sadar.