

Malaria, diarrhoea getting out of control in CHT

From CHT Correspondent

RANGAMATI, July 5: Malaria and diarrhoea have broken out in almost every village of the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban including urban areas.

So far 290 people have died and over one lakh people attacked by the diseases since May 18. 47 deaths from malaria and 13 from diarrhoea were recorded with the concerned authorities.

The deaths included one soldier, a member of the Village Defence Party and the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Zarahchi thana, Azizul Haque age 48.

According to reports available with the different administrations, local leaders and social workers, malarial and diarrhoeal death toll stood at 625 from January 1995 to June 24, 1995. More than one lakh people suffered from the diseases, the reports added.

Within 48 hours from June 18, malaria claimed lives of six children in Khagrachhari hill district. During the same period two persons died of malaria at Bhashmadyam in Langadu thana of Rangamati hill district.

Assuming an alarming turn, malaria claimed 27 lives in last 15 days including one troop, a member of Village Defence Party along with 15 children in Rangamati thana of Khagrachhari hill district, where seven deaths were officially recorded.

In an on-the-spot survey on June 16, it was observed that almost all the members of the families living in the cluster villages of Patachhari and Nakapa in Rangamati thana have been attacked with malaria. Out of 27 persons who died in the first fortnight of June in this thana 21 were from these two cluster villages.

The ailing people of this area told The Daily Star that they are not getting any effective medicare services from

About 4 lakh planted seedlings stolen from forest areas

From CHT Correspondent

RANGAMATI, July 5: About four lakh seedlings of different valuable species including stumps of teak, planted in the reserved forests of Adrakchhara and Bhaibonchhara beat of Utachhari range in Rangamati Jhoom Control Forest Division were reportedly stolen by an unidentified group of miscreants, within a fortnight in dark of nights, local people alleged.

The cost of pilfered seedlings and stumps including the labour cost in planting will be, in terms money, around Taka 15 lakh. Replanting of seedling and stumps are under way to cover the vacant area caused due to illegal removal of seedlings and stumps, observers said.

When contacted, Langadu thana police said no such case on pilferage of planted seedlings and stumps was lodged yet.

The Divisional Forest Officer of Rangamati Jhoom Control Forest Division was not available on June 22, Thursday at his office for comments.

Dhalia bridge construction: Irregularities alleged

From CHT Correspondent

MATIRANGA (Khagrachhari), July 5: A contractor in connivance with the concerned officials has been committing irregularities in construction of Dhalia bridge on Khagrachhari-Chittagong road over Dhalia river.

Local leaders and the observers alleged that the bridge is being constructed using local sand in place of Sylhet sand. Sub-standard materials are also being used violating the terms and conditions of the schedule, they added.

The Dhalia bridge at a cost of Taka 2.25 crore is under construction by the Roads and Highways Department.

Shantibahini member surrenders

From CHT Correspondent

THANCHI (Bandarban), July 5: A member of the tribal insurgents gave himself up on June 28 to the security forces stationed here, according to an official report recently.

Priyo Ranjan Chakma, Himel, 22, surrendered to the security forces and also handed over one Zipsy rifle with 121 rounds of bullets and three magazines along with 80 Indian rupee, sources said.

the government. "The field workers occasionally come and give few tablets which do not help us, and so we are compelled to seek treatment from the quacks," said Nasimuddin, 50, an inmate of Nakapa cluster village. Malaria claimed his wife and one son in May last.

It DDT, malathion type of liquid or insecticide were sprayed from April to October, malaria could have been controlled to a convenient extent as it takes a serious turn during this period of every year in CHT, a medical officer of Rangamati thana said.

Thana Health and Family Planning Officer, Dr Noor Mohammad said, for repeated attack of malaria and taking of chloroquine type of medicine repeatedly, it has become resistant. The effective type of malarial drug, now-a-days, is Ijasoquine, official supply of which is very insufficient, Noor Mohammad added.

In the different markets of Rangamati thana, Ijasoquine tablet of 300 mg is being sold at Taka 4.50 to 5 per tablet and the Ijasoquine injection at Taka 11 per ampule.

The cluster villagers and helpless inmates of the other villages in CHT can not afford these effective but costly medicine. The dwellers of 78 cluster villages in Khagrachhari Hill District solely depended on supply of government ration.

Malaria and diarrhoea have also broken out in Manikchhari, Luxmichhari, Guimara, Panchhari, Dighinala thanas of Khagrachhari hill district.

People of Razasthali, Borkal, Zurachhari, Baghaichhari, Langadu, Naiuachar, Kaulkhal and Belachhari thana, out of the ten thanas of Rangamati hill district have been suffering simultaneously from malaria and diarrhoea.

Diarrhoea claimed 18 lives in Thansi thana, from June 7 to 16. Sources said that on information of breaking out of diarrhoea is epidemic form, two health-assistant who went there for rendering medicare services, were also attacked with diarrhoea.

Suffering people of Thansi thana along with local leaders alleged that, people, majority of whom are tribals have been dying of malaria

and diarrhoea without any medicare services as the only medical officer of Thansi thana has been sent on deputation to Balipara BDR zone.

Malaria and Diarrhoea have been claiming at least 7 to 10 lives monthly in every thana, Bir Bahadur MP from Bandarban alleged.

Those who could shift from the malaria-prone area to the safer places where medicare services are available, they have already shifted. But several lakhs hapless people have been living in the inaccessible areas admitting the 'discreet death' of malaria, said Aranendu Tripathi, the Public Relation Officer of Rangamati Local Government Council.

An young working doctor in a hospital in CHT, who tries to keep himself well informed with present over-all malarial and diarrhoeal situation, said, we are not so equipped technically or materially to attend even ten per cent of the patient approaching us daily for treatment.

Of late, Samiran Dewan, Chairman of the Local Government Council of Khagrachhari hill district has announced to distribute mosquito-nets among the hapless and destitute people in the malaria-prone locality worth of Taka three lakh. The mosquito-nets, will however, be distributed soon after immersing in anti-mosquito liquid by the Civil Surgeon of Khagrachhari.

Meanwhile, the Parbatya Chattagram National Co-ordination and Peace Council, an organization, working towards establishing harmony in CHT, appealed to the government to provide the hospitals and health complexes in CHT with sufficient physicians and medicare.

The statement says that over 2000 people died and 20,000 were attacked with malaria and diarrhoea during the last three months in CHT. The Council also expressed deep concern over ever-increasing attack of malaria and diarrhoea in the cluster villages, in accessible tribal hamlets of CHT. The government should at least form 20 medical team equipped with adequate malarial and diarrhoeal experts as well as medicare materials to contain the diseases, the statement added.

Non payment of power bills

KHS staff put KES officials in trouble

From A K M Zahoorul Huq

KAPTAL (Rangamati), July 5: The officials of Kaptai Electric Supply (KES) have been apprehending to be sacked from the services at any time for failure to realise the outstanding electricity revenue lying against the employees of Karnafuli Hydro Station amounting to Taka more than one crore, though they have been realising almost cent per up to date billed amount from the consumers within their network of supplying, officials said.

KES has collected the electricity revenue of an amount of Taka 52 lakh in May '95 including a scanty amount as arrears. It supplies electricity to consumers worth over Taka 50 lakh monthly against some 3,100 connections.

Excluding the 700 connections in Karnafuli Hydro Station (KHS) against the employees of Power Development Board, serving there, KES has 16 industrial, 46 high tension and low tension, 954 commercials as well as 1816 domestic connections against whom, the monthly billing amount stands at around Taka 50 lakh. It bills a revenue for consuming electricity to 700 KHS employees amounting to Taka 4.5 lakh per month rebating 300 unit of electricity per consumer as per decision of the Board. The employees of Power Development Board (PDB) are allowed to consume 300 unit free of cost, where supply of gas is not available, sources said.

The 700 defaulter consumers of KHS have been avoiding payment of electricity revenue violating the decision and directive of the Board, despite ceaseless drive of KES to wards realisation of the amount.

The PDB in the 616th Board meeting held in Dhaka in March '95 very clearly directed the concerned authority to expedite payment of outstanding electricity revenue lying against the employees of KHS, an official of KES told The Daily Star requesting not to be named.

For failure to realise outstanding bill from the employees of KHS, the officials of KES did not get their production bonus prior to the last Eidul Azha, whereas violating the Board's directive and avoiding the payment, the employees of KHS got the production bonus, the source alleged, adding that instead of censured the defaulters are rewarded.

Besides, the outstanding bill against the employees of KHS, KES is in problem with an outstanding of an amount of Taka 11,87,000, against the employees of Bangladesh Water Development Board, serving and residing in KHS. More-over another amount of Taka 15,66,000 is also lying outstanding against 74 connections in the government installations excluding Taka 4.5 lakh against the Thana Nirbahi Officer, Razasthali and Taka four lakh against fire station, Kaptai.

A number of 226 untraced consumers, according to KES 'haddis bihin gahok', who consumed electricity worth Taka 12,23,000 during the year 1972-77 has figured high the total of unpaid electricity revenue, an official of KES said.

Quoting a confidential report of the Assistant Director, Security of KHS, the source said that about 450 consumers have been consuming electricity illegally inside the KHS territory. KHS, a key point installation, considered as a prohibited and restricted zone, virtually beyond any control of KES, the sources added. Referring the fate of the Mohalchhari Electric Supply under Rangamati Electricity Distribution Division-II, where every incumbents ranking from sweeper to Resident Engineer were put under suspension for failure to realise the electricity revenue for the fiscal 1993-94 up to the target, the source apprehend that the 44 staff of KES may lose their jobs if at least the employees of KHS avoid further in making payment of the outstanding electricity revenue.

Four convicted for murder in Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, July 5: Muhammad Rafiuddin, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Pabna, convicted four persons on charge of murder. The judge further sentenced them all to pay a fine of Taka 3,000 each, and in default to suffer rigorous imprisonment for six months more each.

The four convicted persons are Babul, Momen, Kawser Ali and Mukhtar Hossain.

In his judgment, the judge found three other chargesheeted persons not guilty of the charges brought against them and passed orders acquitting them.

The prosecution case, in brief, is that Al-Helal alias Laloo, 25, of village Sheel under Santhia police station, was called out from his home by the accused persons and then he was murdered on August 6, 1991.

The body of Al-Helal was recovered from a paddy-field of the area two days after the incident.

A case was registered with police.

Two fugitives arrested in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, July 5: Saikupa police arrested two accused from village Hatfajilpur thana of the district recently.

According to reports, acting on a secret information, police raided the village and arrested Abu Bakar and Afzal Hossain. They were accused of looting in Pangsha thana of Rajbari district and a murder case in Saikupa thana, police said.

Police sources said, Afzal and some others allegedly killed a young boy Palash on April 24 this year and buried the body in a crop field at village Bagutia in Saikupa thana of the district. Further Afzal was also involved in killing of a police constable of Pangsha police station and looting a gun from him, police sources informed. He might be an activist of outlawed Sarbahara Party, sources said.

Dacoits kill one in Rangamati

From CHT Correspondent

RAZASTHALI (Rangamati), July 5: A gang of armed dacoits killed a businessman, injured five members of his family and looted cash and goods worth over Taka 1.5 lakh from three houses at Kpdala, a hamlet, adjacent to Razasthali recently.

According to witnesses, a gang of dacoits numbering about 20-25 entered the house of Sunil Das and on gun-point looted eight tolas of gold, one television-set, one tape-recorder and Taka 4,000 in cash.

Later, the dacoits raided the house of next-door neighbour, Sadhan Das and looted ornament weighing about three tolas, Taka 1500 in cash along with other valuable goods. When Sadhan, 29, tried to catch a member of the gang, one of the dacoits opened fire on him. Sadhan was shot twice from point blank range. He died within few hours of incident. Five members of Sadhan's family, who tried to resist the dacoits were also seriously beaten up, the witnesses said.

The dacoits then raided the house of another neighbour, Shelly Das and looted some valuable goods.

Police sent the body of Sadhan Das to general hospital for post-mortem. A tense situation has been prevailing in the area following the incident.

The villagers have urged the concerned authority for police patrol in the night.

Miscreants injure six in Saikupa

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, July 5: Six persons including an elderly woman were injured when a group of miscreants assaulted them indiscriminately at village Bamankhali under Gangarampur union of Saikupa thana of Magura district on Thursday night.

A seriously injured person, Nur Mia, was taken to Khulna Hospital.

When contacted the UP chairman Abdul Halim told The Daily Star that law and order situation in this union and adjoining areas has deteriorated sharply.

This he claimed is due to migration of activists of outlawed party in this region after they suffered heavy casualty in confrontation with police in Sripur and Magura recently.

BRDB projects in Jhenidah

Helping assetless women

From Delwar Kabir



JHENIDAH: Members of Mahila Bittahin Samabaya Samiti are given training on various projects by BRDB. The picture shows a class of the society members taking lessons on Family Planning.

JHENIDAH, July 5: Basanti Rani, Dilara Begum and all other members of Kushna Bazarpara Mahila Bittahin Samabaya Samiti (MBSS) can sign their name now, said Basanti Rani, 28, of village Kushna in Kotchandpur thana of Jhenidah district.

Basanti, a mother of two children took Taka 22 thousand as loan for her society she works with from Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) under Rural Poor Credit Project (RPCP) in Kotchandpur thana in the fiscal year 1993-94. They received the money against their 17-member society which is locally known as 'samity' and returned the money within a year.

The society further received a loan of Taka 71 thousand last year against their small trade in the village like selling bamboo and cane and for other purposes. Each member of the samity earns Taka between 60 and 65 daily with their business, said another member of the samity, Dilara Begum, 25. She said that everybody in their society can sign their names and they are trying to stand on own.

Balarampur Mahila Bittahin Samabaya Samiti (MBSS) is also showing its good performances of self-help in the rural areas. While visiting, this correspondent saw some women, most of whom are widows, engaged in paddy husking and other similar jobs.

Shahar Banu, who is in her mid twenties and the manager of the said MBSS from village Balarampur, said that her society took a sum of Taka 33 thousand in 1993 and after recovery of the money she again drew Taka 55 thousand for paddy husking. Now each member of her society is earning between Taka 60 to 65 daily against small services. But earlier, Shahar Banu informed that she had to pass the days in hardship as her husband was a day labourer who could hardly afford a meal or two a day. After realising the money she was gradually able to remove poverty from her family with her small but satisfactory

earnings. Above all this Banu showed courage in earning for the family. Now she has been constructing a pucca building on a small piece of land in the village Balarampur.

Md Seraj Uddin Biswas, Thana Project Officer (TPO), RPCP, under BRDB informed The Daily Star that in 1993 they started functioning in Kotchandpur thana with their small capital of Taka 3,089 only and after just three years their capital increased to Taka more than four lakh.

The TPO also informed that they have been giving loans among the distressed women specially the widows and divorced women who were really neglected in the society. Now RPCP activities of BRDB is extended in 76 villages of Kotchandpur thana out of total of 112 villages. Number of loanee societies were 57, the TPO added. He also informed that all six union parishads (UPs) including Kotchandpur pourasabha were brought under the project. Now total members of RPCP is 1,186, it was learnt.

The Thana Project Officer said that poverty alleviation in rural areas is the main object of BRDB and to make all the programmes a success they had been working in remote areas and collecting data. In Kotchandpur thana they have been giving loans against small trade, beef fat-

tening, rickshaw-vans, bamboo and cane, 'chira' or dry flattened rice preparation, paddy husking, goat purchasing, tailoring and cow rearing, the TPO further informed.

About 736 people have been provided with loans worth about Taka 12 lakh this year, it was also learnt.

Debashish Kundu, a field organiser of RPCP told that they do not allow any loan or credit support for those women who have more than two children. Here, the organisation is also campaigning in favour of Family Planning (FP) programmes to form happy families among the society members. Debashish also informed that they are running their activities abreast other societies or NGOs.

The Thana Project Officer

further informed that with regard to activities of BRDB, Kotchandpur thana was declared as the best thana during last six months in Jhenidah and Magura districts. The TPO further informed that the BRDB employees are also engaged in sanitation, mass education, and tree plantation programmes in respective areas. Each of the society members were given a sapling free of cost, which will help grow consciousness about tree plantation among them, he added.

Distressed, oppressed women learning to stand in societies

From M A Ali Himu



NATORE: Handbooks of fisheries training being distributed among poor women as a part of WEDP in Natore. — Star photo

NATORE, July 5: Women Entrepreneurs Development Programme (WEDP) of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) has started its operation in Natore on March 27, 1993 with a view to improve living condition of distressed, helpless and socially oppressed rural women as a part of its countrywide programme through socio-economic and cultural development projects.

From the beginning WEDP motivated, organised and trained women to enable them to assume an active role in the society by contributing at the same time to their family's progress through income generating activities.

Based on motivation, the WEDP is guiding thousands of women to income generating activities through 25 projects including jute handicrafts, tailoring, embroidery, paddy husking, livestock and poultry rearing, cow milking, cow fattening, and leather processing. The projects are conducted through WEDP's 40 centres by providing loan facility.

About 3000 women are directly or indirectly involved in this programme.

The WEDP has disbursed loans worth more than Taka 32 lakh for implementing 20 projects till May 31. During the same period, WEDP recovered Taka 24,42,000. The WEDP recommends loan to banks after justifying the general condition of the appli-

cants and trains them in respective sectors for proper utilisation of their loan.

The WEDP does not handle money directly for shortage of manpower, an official said. Banks collect 10 per cent simple interest from the applicants for the purposes of depositing and collection of loans.

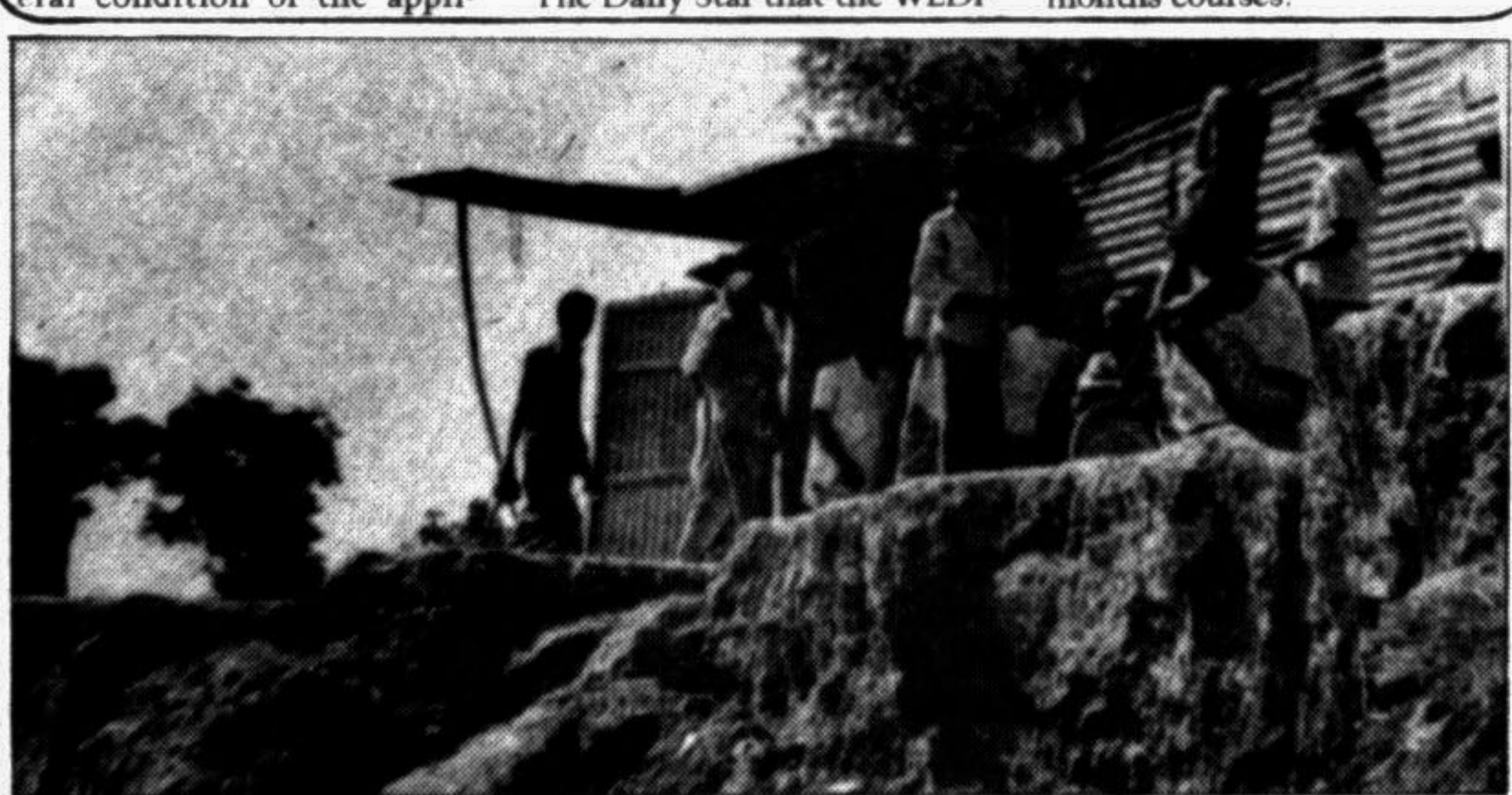
An applicant told this correspondent that WEDP, BSCIC should disburse loans directly to avoid banking harassment and delay in getting loans.

When contacted, Homaira Khanam, Extension Officer (Incharge, Natore WEDP) told The Daily Star that the WEDP

has been working to change the fate of rural helpless and oppressed women for developing their socio-cultural and economic status through income generating activities.

She added that over 1,200 of those women have been directly provided self-sufficiency and over 5000 more have been indirectly benefited by WEDP, Natore.

It trains 209 women every year on skill development training, bakery, handicrafts, poultry rearing, fisheries, livestock and tailoring and embroidery training all of which vary from one week to three months courses.



PABNA: Continuous erosion in river Jamuna forced the shifting of some shops near Nagarbari ferry ghat. — Star photo by Ranesh Maitra

Engineer sacked for corruption in Khagrachhari

From CHT Correspondent

KHAGRACHHARI, July 5: An executive engineer of Khagrachhari Roads and Highways Circle was fired for alleged corruptions.

The Secretary, Roads and Communications Division, Ministry of Communication, in his letter on June 17, communicated to the Chief Engineer, Roads and Highways that departmental case should be constituted against the sacked Executive Engineer of Khagrachhari Roads and Highways Division-II, Nasir Mohammad.

The letter also instructed the Chief Engineer to immediately replace the sacked engineer.

The Superintendent Engineer of Khagrachhari Roads and Highways Circle, Nurul Amin, when contacted recently confirmed the sacking of Nasir Mohammad. When asked Nurul Amin told The Daily Star that the enquiry on over payment made to a construction firm and pilferage of boulders in Khagrachhari Roads and Highways Division-II has been completed.

An accountant of the division was assaulted by the contractors on June 6 for informing the higher authorities of over payment made to a construction firm and some other irregularities adopted by the concerned engineers in connivance with the working contractors.

20 injured in road mishap in Kushtia

KUSHTIA, July 5: Some 20 people were injured, three seriously, in a road accident at Mangolbaria bazar, one mile off the town on Sunday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said that the accident occurred when a Bheramara bound bus lost its control and hit an electric pole.

The three seriously injured Suk Chand, 20, Sukur Ali, 25, and Itfaq Hossain, 30, who fell down from the roof of the bus were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital while the others were released after first aid.

Condition of Suk Chand was stated to be critical. A case has been filed with the police.

Mosques allocated no fund in CHT

From CHT Correspondent

RANGAMATI, July 5: About hundred mosques in the 23 thanas of the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban were not allocated with any fund at all by the Ministry of Religious Affairs for the fiscal 1994-95 for their maintenance and renovation, the concerned sources alleged.

For about two dozens of mosques in Lama and sadar thana of Bandarban hill district the concerned ministry accidentally allocated Taka five thousand against each of these mosques in two thanas, the sources added.

The step-mother like one-eyed endeavour of the concerned ministry in allocation of fund and the negligence shown to the mosque-going religious Mohammedans has created a displeasure among them. Except a few mosques sponsored and managed by the particular agencies, all the mosques in Chittagong Hill Tracts are in dilapidated condition, awaiting government patronization.

Two dacoits given RI in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, July 5: Mohammed Mahabat Uddin, Assistant Session Judge, Jhenidah awarded two persons one year RI each and fined them Taka five hundred, in default to suffer another one month.

According to reports, on July 17, 1988 some local lease holders along with some police personnel were returning from Talsarhat on a truck. Some dacoits put up a barricade with bricks on road at Saratala in Mohespur thana of the district and tried looting the passengers.

The lease-holder and the police personnel challenged them and caught two of the dacoits, Jabbar Mandal and Azam Khan. Rest of the dacoits managed to flee.

Police, submitted charge sheet against Jabbar Mandal, Azam Khan, Shahjahan and Serajul Islam after investigation.

The Assistant Session Judge awarded RI to accused Jabbar Mandal and Azam Khan and released Shahjahan and Serajul Islam from the charge.