

# Shortage of aman seeds hits cultivation target in Khulna Div

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 15: Serious aman seed crisis is persisting in South Western part of the country affecting aman cultivation programme in the area.

According to an official source, the regional office of Agricultural Extension Department had fixed a target to cultivate aman paddy on 16,79,775 acres of land throughout 10 districts of Khulna Division. The districts are Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Jessore, Narail, Magura, Jhenidah, Kushtia, Meherpur and Chuadanga. However, most of the farmers in the region could not achieve the target due to prolong drought. Only 5,90,912 acres of land could be used for aman cultivation with the help of irrigation while 10,88,863 acres remain uncultivated. Meanwhile, aman seedlings all over the region worth more than Taka 200 crore had been damaged due to extreme heat following drought this year.

According to farmers, production of aman in the last few consecutive years in this region was bumper. But last year, the farmers say loss was quite heavy and they also expect the situation will remain unchanged in the following years.

The aman paddy cultivation in Khulna Division was also hampered for want of adequate rain as well as poor water supply from the GK Project command area as the pump houses could not be switched on due to low flow of water-level in the river Ganges.

The farmers in the region, meanwhile, are passing hard days. Over 95 per cent of the farmers directly depend on income from selling their produce. The competitive market too became difficult for them.

In view of the experience gathered resulting from scanty rainfall recorded in last five or more years and non-operation of GK pump houses during aus seasons, experts strongly feel that the GK Project authority needs an alternative plan of rehabilitating farmers in the project area in a manner which suits the present demand.

The experts also said that the subsidiary pump house at Bheramara could be re-installed lowering its depth so the pump holds capacity to pull water from even deeper

inside to be supplied to intake channel in the lean periods. At the same time, dredging of the river Ganges at Hardings Bridge point as well as at the intake channel point will have to be continued, the experts added.

Simultaneously, a floating pump house should be commissioned immediately for large scale pumping of water from the river Ganges for feeding 1655 kilometer long canal network spreading over Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Magura and Jessore districts. The cost of a floating pump house, including commissioning would be about Taka 200 crore which the experts say, can certainly benefit the farmers in lean periods who sustain heavy losses every year since 1989.

The experts further said that the income from the additional crop production will be around Taka one hundred crore in aus season and Taka one hundred and fifty crore in aman season. The experts also suggested to expand the area of canal network of GK Project at the tail end, provided the floating pump house is commissioned.

The GK Project command area has no deep or shallow tubewells. Irrigation is provided in those areas from network of canals as per water management arranged by the Irrigation Extension Department of GK Project, both the Phase I and Phase II.

Meanwhile, drought has also affected jute producers for want of water in these districts. The growers have faced immense difficulties in processing their jute fibres for want of sufficient water. Consequently, the quality of their products deteriorated.

Drought has also affected supply of drinking water in the region as ground water level further fell. The hand tubewells were reportedly not working, mostly in rural areas of the region. About 70 to 80 per cent of the tubewells became inoperative, said one source. The rest of the tubewells which are still in operation, pump out little water, said some villagers.

According to Health Department sources, about 2000 people were attacked with diarrhoea and dysentery during last four months in the region for want of drinking water.

## Three commit suicide in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent  
SATKHIRA, Aug 15: Three women including a minor girl committed suicide by taking poison in two thanas of the district recently.

It is reported that one Kumari Nila Rani Sarker, 15, of village Shasha Danga under Debhata thana who failed at the SSC examination this year took poison and died on the spot.

In the other incident, housewife Shilpi Begum, 25, of village Azizpur of the same thana following family trouble took poison and died on spot.

The other incident at village Basantapur under Kalaroa thana where Selina, 9, committed suicide by taking pesticides recently. Family trouble is the cause of her suicide, it is reported.

Three separate UD cases were lodged with Debhata and Kalaroa thanas in these regard.

## Manpower agent cheats youths

From Our Correspondent  
SATKHIRA, Aug 15: Two unemployed youths were cheated by a fake manpower agent recently.

It is reported that the fake manpower agent Monjel Mollah of village Narayanpur under sadar thana took Taka 10 thousand and 27 kathas of cultivable land from Abu Bakar Siddique of Hazipur and Afjal Hossain of Pathorghata both under sadar thana of the district on assurance that they will be provided with jobs in Malaysia. Since July '94, he did not take any step to send them abroad. Even after repeated appeal, he did not refund the money or return the land. Losing all their money and land they had, these two unemployed youths have been passing their days in miserable condition.

They submitted a written complaint against fake manpower agent Monjel Mollah to the Deputy Commissioner, Satkhira and requested him to take legal action against the cheater.

Mentionable that Monjel Mollah have also cheated many other unemployed youths of the area on the same plea.

## RHDLGC awards stipend to 115 students

From CHT Correspondent

RANGAMATI, Aug 15: To improve the quality of education and ensure the higher education for the poor and meritorious students of the district, Rangamati Hill District Local Government Council (RHDLGC) has awarded stipend worth Taka 2.25 lakh to some 115 students in 1994-95, prosecuting studies in the different educational institutions of the country in the on-going programme introduced in 1992.

Twelve, 16 and 12 students studying in the different medical and engineering colleges including Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology as well as Institute of Post Graduate Medicine and Researches and other universities were awarded stipend at the rate of Taka 2,500 each whereas 15 students of honours courses and five of the graduate level were awarded Taka two thousand per head 55 students studying in the intermediate level were provided also with Taka 1,500 each, said Arumendu Trepura, the Public Relation Officer of RHDLGC.

With the introduction of the programme in 1992, a total of 415 students of the different sectors of education awarded with the stipend by the RHDLGC for prosecuting their studies, more than hundred of whom have already completed their study successfully, source said.

## Erosion of Arial Khan renders 5,000 jobless

MADARIPUR, Aug 15: The river Arial Khan has rendered several thousand of people unemployed as it eroded the age-old Utrail Port in Shibchar thana totally in the last fortnight, reports UNB.

The river eroded some 1000 business establishments and two madrasahs. Krishni Bank and dwelling houses worth taka several crore were also eroded.

President of Shibchar Bazar Committee, Newaz Ahmed Chowdhury told UNB that a branch of Bangladesh Krishni Bank, Melodi cinema hall, Utrail High School, Dakhlil and Hafiza Madrasahs, food godowns, and land office were engulfed by the river.



SYLHET: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman speaking at the inaugural function of the 6th book selling centre of Bangla Academy in Sylhet recently. — Star photo

In 1994-95 FY

## North Bengal Paper Mills suffers Tk 12 cr loss

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, Aug 15: The North Bengal Paper Mills of Paksey, a public sector Paper Mills is learnt to have suffered a huge loss of Tk 12 crore during 1994-95.

During the said financial year, the Mill exceeded the target of production by about 500 tons. The production target was fixed at 11,000 metric tons.

The mill surprisingly suffered a huge loss. When enquired, it was revealed that the cost of production was too high and the prices of paper were below the production cost. Besides, the North Bengal Paper Mill, since its inception never went to its capacity production. Target of production was never fixed at the capacity levels for several reasons.

Among them, no guarantee for obtaining the main raw-material—bagasse, from the sugar mills and its high transshipment cost was stated.

Inadequate and irregular supply of electricity also contributed to the problem. The machines are stated to be all out-dated. From the time when those were produced during the sixties and

were being used for about long 30 to 35 years. The mill should be provided with gas instead of furnace oil to minimise the production cost. Furnace oil worth about Tk 16 crore are consumed every year by the mill. But this cost can be reduced to Tk one crore only if gas could be used instead of furnace oil.

Due to the adverse effect of Farakka, Padma remains completely dry for at least six months every year. This hampers the supply of water for the mill. About 17,000 gallons of water are required everyday for keeping the mill running. Hence, due to frequent and continues non-availability of water, production of paper suffers badly. To meet the circumstance about Tk one crore is spent annually for dredging the river Padma.

The North Bengal Paper Mill can increase its production upto 15,000 metric tons a year if two digester machines could be installed, but nothing such is being arranged, it is alleged.

Moreover, various sorts of corruption, it is alleged, are also continuing in various departments of the mill.

## Alleged rapist surrenders, another still on run in CHT

From CHT Correspondent

KHAGRACHHARI, Aug 15: A co-accused of a rape case, Khalilur Rahman was sent to jail on Tuesday when he surrendered to the court thirty days after committing a rape at Beichhari village in Dighinala thana of the district, court sources said.

Iman Ali, a member of Merung Union Parishad in Dighinala thana of the district along with Khalilur Rahman allegedly raped a housewife, Laily Begum, 24, a mother of one of Batchhari village when she reportedly came to them for an arbitration on July 09 last, police sources said.

UP member Iman Ali, the principal accused of the case been absconding till date.

On filing a case with Dighinala police by the victim on July 10, the accused went to hiding. With growing public agitation the police declared a cash reward for assisting them to round up the accuseds and at this stage the accuseds reportedly left the area wearing burkha. In Khagrachhari they took shelter at the house of Amin Miah of Muslimpara in the town. Sensing raid of the police, the accuseds once again left for unknown destination.

The medical report of Laily regarding violation were found positive, sources

added. It was alleged that the UP member Iman Ali had violated another woman last year when he was penalised Taka four thousand in a village arbitration to arrange marriage of the victim, police said quoted the village 'madbors' as saying.

Immediately after the filing of specific rape case with the police Abul Hashem, the Superintendent of Police, Khagrachhari hill district accompanied with other police officials visited Batchhari village and directed the arrest of the accuseds.

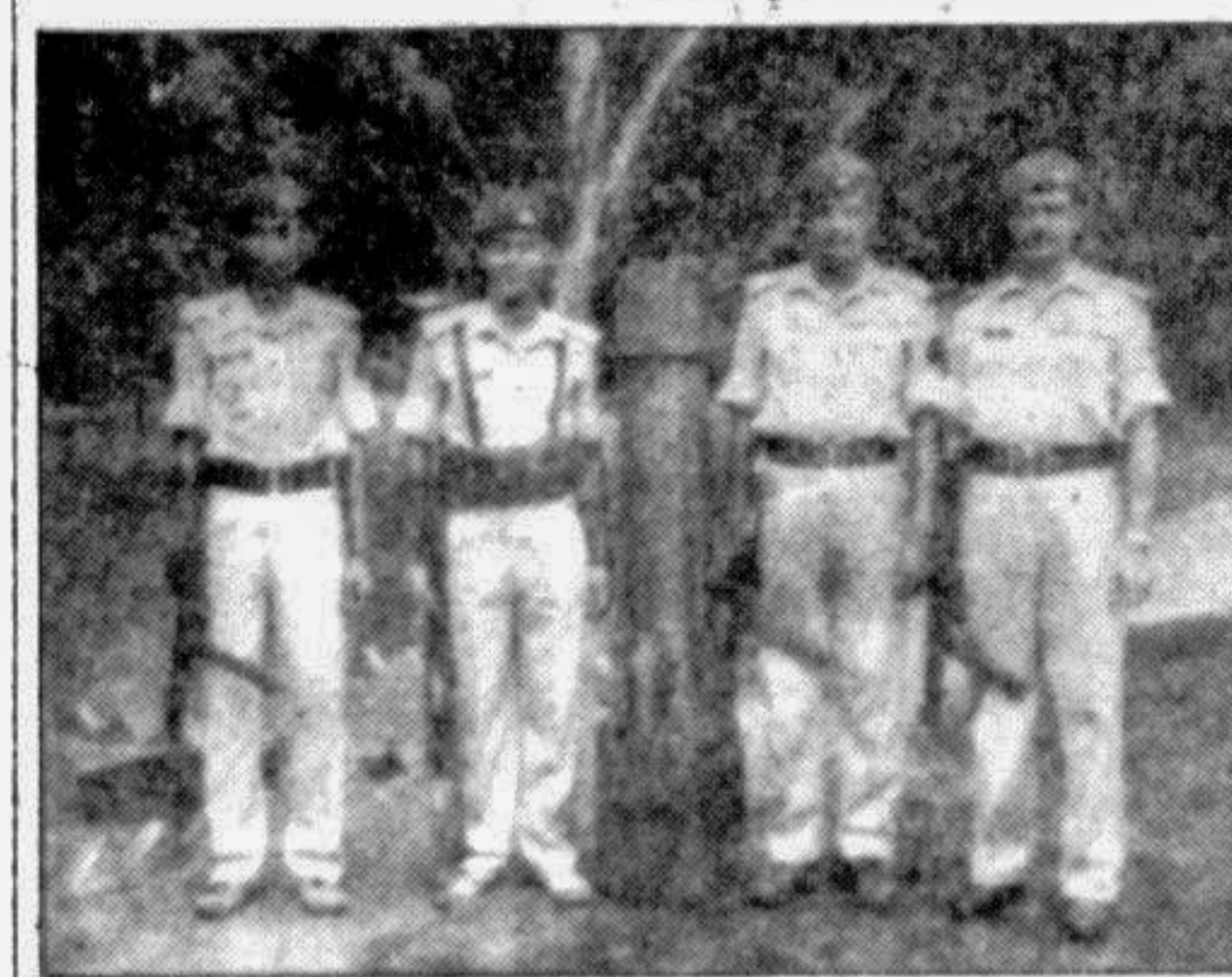
World Breast Feeding Day observed

From Our Correspondent  
SATKHIRA, Aug 15: World Breast Feeding Week was observed here in a befitting manner. To mark the occasion, seminars and discussion meetings highlighting the benefits of breast feeding were held.

On Monday, the last day of the week, a discussion meeting was held at sadar thana auditorium with Dr. Md. Khalilur Rahman, Civil Surgeon, Satkhira in the chair.

## Beam of touchstone recovered

From Our Correspondent



RAJSHAHI: BDR jawans standing with the seized column of touchstone. — Star photo

RAJSHAHI, Aug 15: Bangladesh Rifles, 14 battalion personnel seized a broken beam of touchstone worth about Taka one crore on last August 6 from a remote village of Tanore thana about 50 kilometers from Rajshahi.

On receiving a secret information, a special patrol group of Bangladesh Rifles led by 14 battalion Commander Major Chowdhury Fazlul Bari raided the house of one

Anwar Hussain, the village of Chaorh and recovered the valuable embrodered beam. BDR sources said that Anwar Hossain had kept the touchstone sculpture hidden in his house for about 10 years.

Recently a group of smugglers was contacting him to buy and smuggle it to India.

The recovered beam was handed over to the local custom office.

## Ex-UP chairman arrested for misappropriating money

From CHT Correspondent

KHAGRACHHARI, Aug 15: Khagrachhari police has recently rounded up an ex-union parishad chairman from Court Road allegedly defalcating Taka 4,52,640 and wanted against eleven cases lodged by the local Bureau of Anti-Corruption.

Khokan Lal Roaza, ex-chairman of Perachhora union parishad in sadar thana of the district was arrested by the Officer-in-Charge of Khagrachhari police station, Mohammad Ali, under authority of warrant of arrest issued by the court, police sources said.

The district unit of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption has submitted charge-sheets of five cases out of eleven lodged against the former chairman of Perachhora union parishad for misappropriation of Taka 4,52,640 in 1992 while he was chairman.

Khokan is also the headman of Perachhora mouza.

## Follow ideals of the Prophet to attain peace, urges RU VC

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 15: Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University Professor Muhammad Yusuf Ali urged all to follow the ideals and life style of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) as these had been proved as the only way to achieve peace in all spheres of life.

Prevailing disharmony, unrest, oppression and communalism can be well-treated with the ideals of the Prophet, he said.

Professor Yusuf was addressing a seminar on "Ideals and life style of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM)" held on Wednesday last at the auditorium of Islamic Foundation at Hatem Khan Bara Masjid complex.

Arranged by the Islamic Foundation as part of seven-day long programmes on the occasion of Eid-e-Milad-un-nabi, the seminar was presided over by Dr Sadruddin Ahmed, Professor in English of Rajshahi University and addressed among others, by the Additional Divisional Commissioner (Revenue) Habibur Rahman as the special guest and Shah Habibur Rahman, Professor in Economics of Rajshahi University.

## Huge smuggled Indian goods seized

BRAHMANBARIA, Aug 15: Bangladesh Rifles in a drive seized 178 bottles of phenidyl syrup from Devanagar village in Akhaura, reports UNB.

Acting on secret information, the jawans raided a house of the village on August 3 and recovered the contraband worth about Tk 53,000. None was arrested in this connection.

The contraband was deposited with the Narcotics Control officials of the town.

Meanwhile, local detective police seized 10,580 smuggled Indian eggs from Maldharpara in Akhaura thana on August 6.

Police following a tip-off raided the area and recovered the contraband item. Police arrested Mahub and Anwar in this connection.

A case has been lodged in this connection. In another drive Bangladesh Rifles of 23 rifle battalion seized smuggled Indian goods worth Tk seven lakh from different border areas of the district in the last one week.

Three people were rounded up and handed over to the Akhaura police. All the recovered goods were deposited with the customs godown in Akhaura.

## 10 lakh children given polio vaccines

BARISAL, Aug 15: A total of about ten lakh children have been given polio vaccines in six southern districts of Barisal Division under National Immunisation Day (NID), reports BSS.

According to an official source, about 91 per cent children have been brought under this programme in these districts. Of the total 3.16 lakh children were given polio in Barisal district, 1.79 lakh children in Patuakhali, 2.33 lakh children in Bholia, 1.10 lakh children in Pirojpur, 69 thousand children in Jhalakati and 85 thousand children in Barguna districts.

## Death trap

PATUAKHALI, Aug 15: The pontoon of the northern end of Patuakhali ferry ghat has become a death trap due to faulty placement, reports UNB.

A minor boy Kamal, 12, was recently injured seriously when he fell into the trap. Another passenger of a Patuakhali bound coaster also received serious injuries when he fell into the gap between the two pontoons.

Local people said accidents are frequent at the gap between two ferries when they anchored side by side at the pontoon. Major accident may occur at any time.

## TK 124 cr agri loan in Barisal region

BARISAL, Aug 15: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) Barisal region has undertaken a programme to disburse Tk 124 crore as agriculture loan among the farmers of the region during the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

The districts are Barisal, Jhalakati, Pirojpur, Bholia, Patuakhali, Barguna, Faridpur, Rajbari, Gopalganj, Madaripur and Shariatpur.

According to an official source, of the total Tk 72 crore will be disbursed as crop loan and the rest as non-crops loan.

The loans are meant for raising aus, aman, boro, wheat, potato, mustard, banana, vegetables, purchasing bullock, irrigation equipment, fishing nets, pisciculture, beef-fattening establishment of dairy farms, poultry farms and for women entrepreneurship development programme (WEDP), the source said.

## Re-opening of RU demanded

From Our Correspondent  
RAJSHAHI, Aug 15: Professional and pro-Islamic teachers of Rajshahi University in a joint meeting on Wednesday demanded re-opening of the university and holding the admission tests of first year honours class as soon as possible. They sought all possible cooperation from the government and all other people of all sections in maintaining congenial atmosphere in Rajshahi University.

Held at physics gallery, the meeting was presided over by Professor Shamsur Rahman of Botany Department with a view to strengthen the values of Islam and Bangladeshi nationalism and maintain congenial atmosphere on the campus.

## Lightning hits Grameen Bank in Pirojpur: 2 die

By Staff Correspondent  
BARISAL, Aug 15: Two people were killed and three others seriously injured when lightning hit the Grameen Bank branch at Kandota village under the Kowkhali thana of Pirojpur district today.

According to witnesses, Abdul Wadud, 55 and Adhir Borogai, 18, were killed instantly when thunderbolt hit the bank at around five in the afternoon.

The injured were admitted to Kowkhali thana health complex.



SYLHET: Habibur Rahman, Divisional Commissioner, Sylhet, speaking at a reception accorded to him by Sylhet Pourashava recently. Badruddin Kamran, chairman of the pourashava and Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet are also seen in the photo. — Star photo

From eight northern districts

## Production of jute likely to fall by 65 pc

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 15: Production of jute will fall by about 65 per cent this year in eight northern districts of greater Rajshahi. Pabna and Bogra regions, official sources here said.

Continued brought at the beginning of the monsoon, shortage of seed, scarcity and high price of fertilizers and pesticides and lastly floods are the reasons behind the shortfall of production of jute this year, it was told.

According to the local Agriculture Extension Department, a target was fixed to bring a total of 81,081 hectares of land under jute cultivation scheme during the current season in the 8 districts of Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Pabna, Sirajganj, Bogra and Joypurhat. But only 41,591 hectares of land could be cultivated due to continued rainlessness and brought, that is 5.30 per cent of the target could be achieved. Recent floods have damaged standing jute crops on a total

of 12,178 hectares of land in these districts. It will destroy the production by about 15 per cent of the target. As a result the jute production is apprehended to be decreased by about 65 per cent this year in these eight districts.

According to the sources, 2,550 hectares of land were cultivated against the target of 6,640 hectares and 199 hectares damaged by floods in Rajshahi. In Natore, target was to cultivate 6,673 hectares, achievement was 3,510 hectares and amount of damage crops by floods is 610 hectares.

Only 1,259 hectares of lands could be cultivated against the target of 8,550 hectares in Naogaon district floods damaged 250 hectares. In Chapainawabganj, target of cultivation was 2,340 hectares and achievement was 410 hectares. Six thousand 798 hectares of lands were brought under jute cultivation in Bogra against the target of 12,050 hectares. In this district floods damaged standing jute crops on about

964 hectares of lands. In Joypurhat district, target was 4,200 hectares, achievement was 2031 hectares and the amount of damage in floods is 170 hectares. A total of 10,925 hectares out of the target of 17,275 hectares could be cultivated in Pabna district and the amount of jute lands damaged by recent floods in this district was 397 hectares. In Sirajganj district a target was fixed to bring out the largest amount of land of 23,353 hectares under jute cultivation this year. But only 14,156 hectares could be cultivated, out of which 9,579 hectares were damaged by the recent floods.

An official here said that the farmers were gradually losing interest in jute cultivation for its low price and recently drought and floods were damaging the crop every year further demoralising them. As a result, the amount of lands for jute cultivation is apprehended to be reduced in future, he said.

## Serious irregular power supply in Chuadanga

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Aug 15: The irregular supply of electricity throughout Chuadanga district has been continuing for the last six months at a stretch every day supply of electricity in Chuadanga town goes off at least five to six times and resumes sometimes after an interval of one to two hours.

The frequency of power failure reaches its peak in the noon and evening hampering production in local industries greatly.

Due to the irregular supply of electricity the hospital patients, students, local mills-factories, shops and press owners have been suffering much. The patients of the hospitals are to use candles during the power failure hours as their is no other alternative arrangements.

The hot weather is also persisting throughout Chuadanga district as a result, the old aged people are becoming ill frequently

especially in the evening as the fans remain off in the houses.

On the other hand, the cultivation has also been affected much for want of electricity in the rural areas where there is Pally Biddut in the district. A vast area of Alamdanga thana of

Chuadanga district now has been brought under Pally Biddut supply net work. A large number of deep tubewells in Alamdanga thana have been electrified for the purpose of cultivation under Pally Biddut Samity net work, but due to frequent power failure in the district, the cultivation work in Alamdanga thana has been hampering much.

Besides 'Pally Biddut' scheme has also been introduced in three other thanas of the district like Chuadanga sadar, Damurhuda and Jibannagar. The people of these three thanas are gradually taking electricity connections in their residence and for deep tubewells for the purpose of using electricity but they are also suffering much due to irregular supply of electricity.

Immediate steps are needed to ensure smooth supply of electricity to the all kinds of consumers of the district.

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