

# Overcoming the aftermath of tornado

**TANGAIL, June 21:** Relief materials for the tornado-hit victims in many villages of the district are yet to reach. According to reports and witnesses, relief material which reached a number of people for rehabilitation of the victims in the worst hit Mirikpur vil-

lage was too little in terms of the demand.

Many victims alleged that the relief for the victims was far too small. Majority of the victims in the village did not get any relief. Food for the children is not at all available.

**From Our Correspondent**

the volunteers working in the areas said.

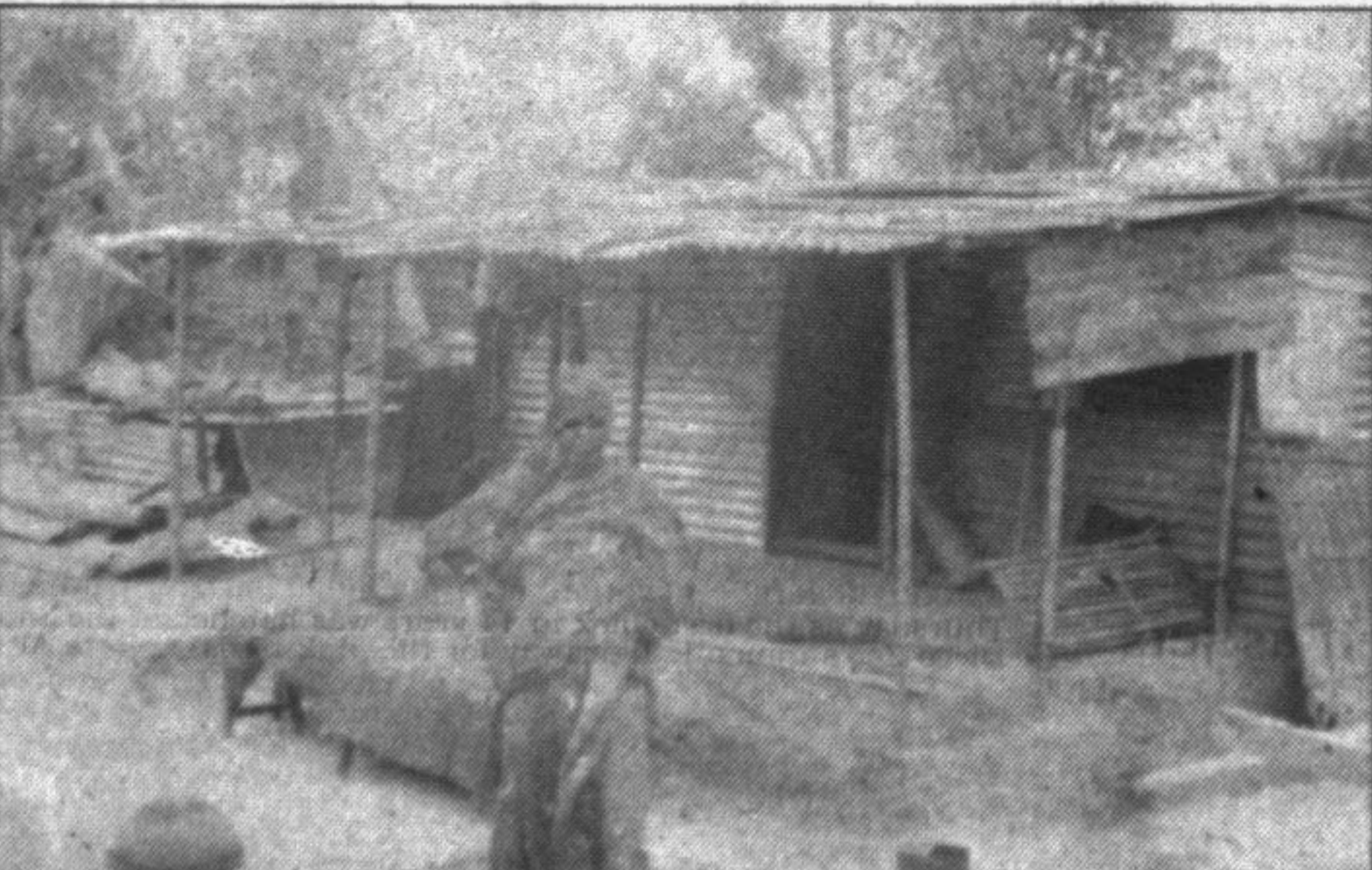
Many other victims said they have not received any food for the last two weeks.

Meanwhile, a Non Government Organisation-Oxfam has been helping the injured vic-

tims giving medical service for the patients.

They have set up a temporary community hospital for the purpose. About 150-180 patients are being treated every day at the camp. In the meantime, a number

of damaged tin-shed houses were repaired. This correspondent while visiting the areas of the Mirikpur village witnessed many people were still seeking medical treatment. Many of the wounded were hospitalised in the temporary thatched house.



**MIRIKPUR (Tangail):** Clockwise from top left, a physician from New Zealand working for the Community Hospital is helping an old woman re-dressing her maimed leg in the temporary medical camp last Wednesday. Patients gather at the medical camp beside the temporary erected hospital. School girls and boys attend a class out on the verandah of the damaged school building where more than 80 people were killed in the building collapse on the day of the disaster. Earth work in progress to erect a house in the locality. A woman standing in front of her house, recently built using damaged tins. A newly built house, a need of the hour.

— Star photos by Monirul Islam Manik

## One killed in Satkhira explosion

**SATKHIRA, June 21:** A young man was killed and another critically injured in a bomb explosion at Kashibati in Kaliganj thana on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Local people said the bomb suddenly went off when a gang of armed miscreants going to commit dacoity in shrimp enclosure on Tuesday night, leaving one of them dead another injured.

The dead was identified as Pear Ali, 30. The injured Niru Sarnawker was admitted to Kaliganj Thana Health Complex.

Rest of the miscreants, however, fled the scene. A case was filed with Kaliganj police.

## Acid thrown at college girl

**CHANDPUR, June 21:** A college girl received serious burn injuries when miscreants threw acid at her in Matlab thana last week, reports UNB.

Police said the miscreants waylaid the rickshaw of Selina Akter, 18, a student of RN Mahila College, on her way to college.

The miscreants fled the scene throwing acid at her. She was rushed to Matlab Thana Health Complex.

As the news spread in the area, students of the college brought out a protest rally in the town demanding exemplary punishment to those responsible for the incident.

## 4 sentenced to imprisonment for violating schoolgirl

**RAJBARI, June 21:** Four people were sentenced to different terms of rigorous imprisonment for violating a school girl in sadar thana on August 12, reports UNB.

Court sources said Judge Mohamad Matur Rahman of the district Special Tribunal Court sentenced Dhirandranath Das to 10 years rigorous imprisonment and fined Tk 10,000 in default, to suffer one year's more RI.

Three other accused of the case — Rabi, Shanta Kumer and Kamal Chandra Das — were awarded seven years rigorous imprisonment, and fined Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer six months more RI.

According to prosecution, the main accused of the case, Dhirandranath Das, aided by his three associates kidnapped a girl, a class VIII student of Chandpur High School, on her way to school at gunpoint.

The miscreants then raped the girl at a house of Harinbadha village.

Later, police recovered the girl from the house and sent her to a local hospital for medical test.

The Judge after examining the witnesses and evidence pronounced the judgement on June 15.

Of the convicts, Dhirandranath Das and Rabi are absconding.

# Leprosy-no more a curse for patients

**From CHT Correspondent**

**CHANDRAGHONA (Rangamati), June 21:** Some 30,000 lepers, abandoned by their families and the society, have got back their normal life at a leprosy hospital at Chandraghona, a hamlet in Kaptai thana of Rangamati hill district.

They have been treated and operated upon at the Chandraghona Leprosy Centre (CLC) since April, 1985, according to official sources.

About six lakh people have been suffering from this deadly disease in the country and some 1.5 crore in the world. According to WHO, Asia has the largest share with about 62 per cent followed by Africa with 34 per cent.

CLC was set up in 1913 as a unit of Chandraghona Christian Mission Hospital established in 1908 by the Baptist Missionary Society at Chandraghona, 50 kilometres from the port city of Chittagong. It was modernized and turned into a full-fledged leprosy hospital in 1985.

Lokman Ali, 45, of Gaibandha has recovered after six years of treatment at the CLC. "I was brought here one day after the Bangabardhu was assassinated and I was released from the hospital a week after president Zia was killed."

"I was not accepted by my family as I became untouchable suffering from the disease," says Lokman, a shoe-maker, a leprosy patient in CLC. He has returned and married a patient, who has also recovered. "We are happy with two normal kids," Lokman added.

Jainal Abedin, 31 from Feni district, who was attacked by the disease in Kuwait while serving there, is under treatment in CLC since 1993. He is improving fast as the disease was detected at an early stage, said an attending physician.

Rani Chakma, 20 of Adirachhori in Khagrachhari, who was abandoned by her husband due to the disease, and many others like her were happy to get "a new life" after treatment at this hospital.

Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by a bacteria called Mycobacterium leprae mainly affecting the skin and the periphery nerves.

Doctors at the hospital told The Daily Star that although leprosy is a disabling disease, with early diagnosis and proper treatment it is possible to cure without any damaging after-effects.

But, they suggested that the patients should be educated in the correct use and care of hands, feet, so that serious damage to the part and troublesome complications and deformities can be prevented.

It is diagnosable, treatable and curable," says Dr Shalila Mong Chowdhury, the first country director of Chandraghona Christian Mission Hospital and its unit, CLC, who has been associating with the

complexes since last two decades. Leprosy can effectively be treated, he asserted adding that once a patient is on adequate therapy, he rapidly become non-infectious.

The Chandraghona Leprosy Centre has 13 clinics in Chittagong Hill Tracts and Chittagong region, providing preliminary and outdoor treatment to the lepers. A total of 1,512 patients were given outdoor treatment in May this year alone.

At present the centre has more than 2,500 lepers under its treatment. On an average, it operates upon 300 patients a year and provides them with free accommodation, medicine, diet, linen, footwear and crutches.

To fight with leprosy, there are 10 hospitals in the country — three run by the government and the rest seven by the non-government organizations.

Of the seven, CLC is the oldest and biggest hospital, opened on February 10, 1913 with only one leprosy patient. Funded by the International Leprosy Mission, it has now one paying bed and 62 general beds.

Housed on the foot of a hill besides the main road in the locality, the CLC has a hill top area of 100 acres where small houses have been built for the rehabilitation of the patients. They are engaged in horticulture and some other income generating activities to earn their livelihood.

Swe Sau Marma, a receptionist at the CLC, was a patient of leprosy for eight years. He is now rehabilitated at the centre as his family declined to accept him after recovery.

As most of the patients are poor and illiterate, the hospital authorities are imparting informal education to them with special emphasis on health education.

Leprosy has been claiming human beings since 600 BC in the globe. The countries in Asia, where leprosy is epidemic, are India, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. This high endemic area makes the belt from the south India to the end of south-east Asia.

According to available statistics, the prevalence rate of Bangladesh in the northern districts is more than 10 in 1,000 population and in the south-eastern districts over five in every 1,000 people.

"Do not be afraid. Leprosy is curable," says Philomena Commons, a British physiotherapist at the hospital, to every leper she takes care of. Before joining the CLC she had worked for Leeds General Infirmary Hospital in Yorkshire, England.

The preventive treatment of leprosy is yet to be invented. So, accurate, diagnosis, proper treatment and rendering of services to the patients are the essential steps to contain the disease, said, Dr. Chowdhury, the Director of CLC.

# No dev work implemented in Pabna pourashava since its starting

**From Ranesh Maitra**

**PABNA, June 21:** Over one lakh fifty thousand inhabitants of Pabna pourashava have been suffering due to lack of civic amenities. Neither the elected chairman and the commissioners nor the officials appointed by the ministry of local government can give any exact idea as to when the situation would actually improve.

When contacted, the chairman and some of the leading commissioners of Pabna pourashava regarding the lack of civic amenities, admitted the problems being faced by the people but hastened to add that severe financial constraints caused by the lack of their habit of payment of municipal taxes, lack of government funding and also due to the faulty attitude of the government towards the local government bodies. They alleged that they had little autonomy and had to remain completely dependant on the bureaucracy and also on the ruling party decisions.

In 1989, Pabna pourashava was raised to the status of a first class pourashabha but since then there has been no real improvement with regard to the fulfilment of the needs of the people. The only improvement that can be noticed is the improvement in increasing the number of the staff and creation of new posts in the office.

The road communication network under Pabna pourashava, is very poor. A few examples will be sufficient to prove the problem. The road from Narikelbagani to the North Bengal High ways near the Ananta Cinema Hall via Kalchandpara is an extremely busy road but it has become completely unserviceable as many holes have appeared all through the road. At many places, cracks developed at least one year back but now repair work has been undertaken as yet throwing the passers-by and the vehicles into utter inconvenience.

The road that passes through the southern corner of

Pabna Government Girl's High School which connects with the main road of the town near the old bus stand is another busy and important road. Thousands of girls studying in the said school pass everyday either by walking or by rickshaw. Moreover, thousands of people have to use this road for daily marketing in the Baro Bazar. But half of this road from the girls' high school point is completely unworthy of use. Rickshaws fall prey to accidents very often, pedestrians also cannot walk as the road remains muddy and under water almost throughout in year. Despite demands raised by all sections of people, the municipal authority do not take up work to improve the

road. The hospital road, starting from thana to the general hospital is also in extremely deplorable condition and no civilized society can conceive of such a neglected and busy and important road as patients, day in and day out, come to this only hospital of its kind in this tiny town.

Except these prominent three roads, there are many other internal roads which are in even worse shape.

All the katcha roads inside the pourashava area should also be immediately be made pucca. The water-supply system in this pourashabha has virtually collapsed. Large number of water-supply connections have been given but without creat-

ing any new supply capacity due to the havoc created by construction of the Farakka Barrage, in India. Under ground water-level has gone even deeper. Out of five three deep tubewells were lying completely damaged. Moreover, the old pipes are also unserviceable and very much prone to contamination.

The pourashabha authorities, although quite aware of such illegal governments made by the resourceful people, have not taken any legal action against such violators of law, they have not even issued any notice upon such persons asking them to show cause as to why lawful actions would not be taken against them. As, no action is being taken against

the violators, more and more people are adopting the same method of installing powerful pumps and hence the poorer ones and law abiding citizens are not getting supply of water from time to time.

An engineer suggests, at least ten deep tubewells should be installed with sufficient lighting and storage capacity to solve the primary problems. The existing age-old pipes should be replaced by new ones, he said. Non-stop supply of electricity is to be ensured for smooth supply of water, he added.

Drainage system is yet another problem. The drains being constructed are found to serve no purpose.

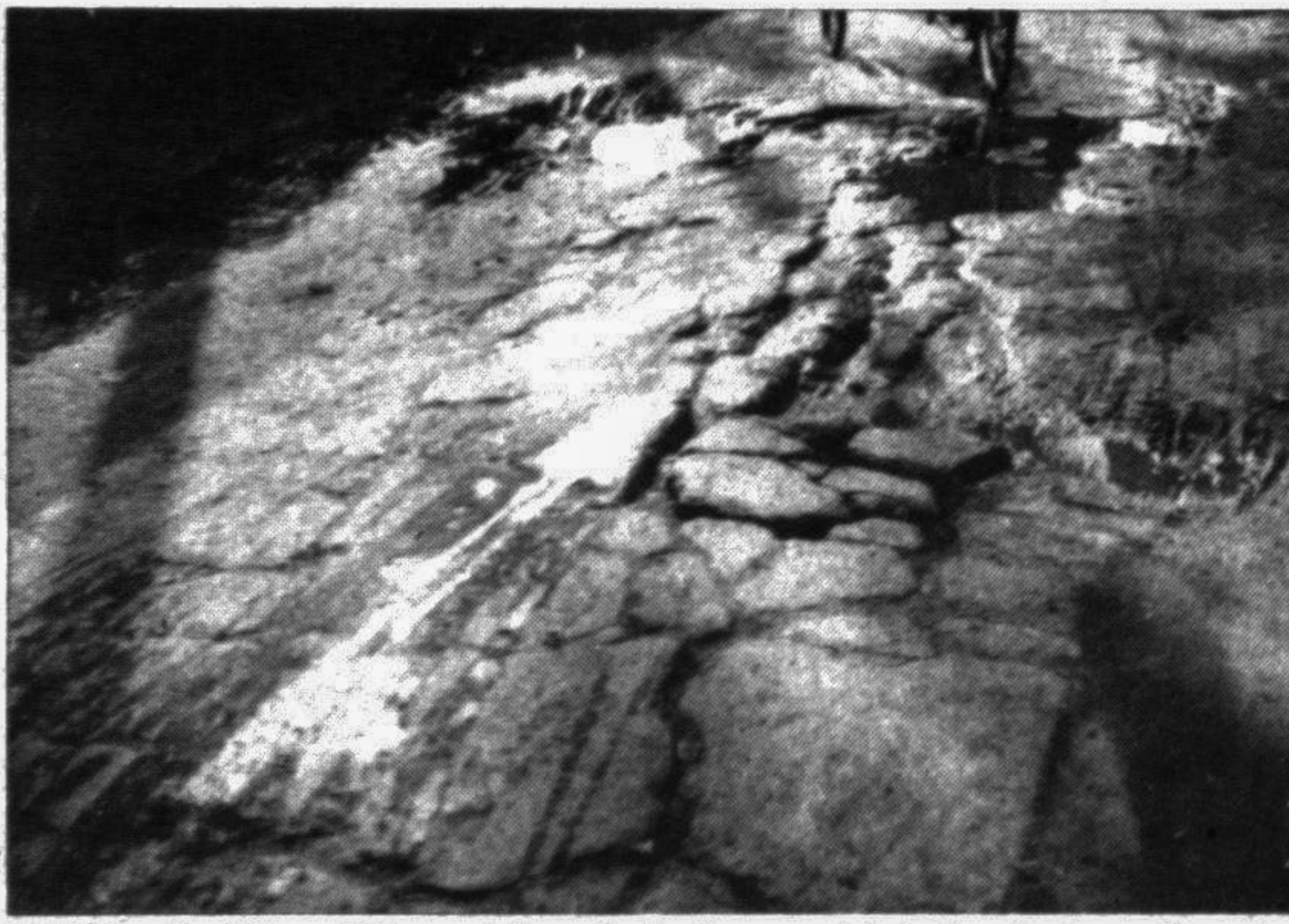
Inadequate number of street-lights pose another problem in as much as at least sixty percent areas of the town. In the remaining 40 per cent areas where there are arrangements for street lights very often electric wires or bulbs are noticed to have been stolen. Power-supply is very irregular. In many areas of the town, street-lights are not found to be put on till 10 pm.

Very little attention has been given towards sanitation. Most of the latrines are still katcha. Drive for installation of sanitary latrines is also mostly absent.

The markets for fish and vegetables etc are not sufficient in number to meet the growing need of the population. Moreover, the existing markets need expansion and modernisation. Proper clearing arrangements are lacking in the tender affairs are widely alleged. It is further alleged that mastaans generally dominate this side.

There is not a single children's park. Now any general park in this town where people can walk, can sit, gossip and have fresh air.

The authorities are required to prepare a master-plan for proper development of the town.



**PABNA** Condition of the road from Narikelbagani point to Ananta Bazar through Kalachandpara. — Star photo



One hundred and fifteen year-old Maieka Begum return after casting her vote on last June 19 repolling day at a centre in Comilla district. — Star photo by SK Enamul Haq