

Mongla Port's handling capacity yet to be utilised

From Amanullah

KHULNA, Oct 1: Country's second largest port at Mongla is gradually losing its importance due to a lot of factors including piracy in foreign vessels, irregularities and malpractices and frequent labour unrest.

Captains of most of the foreign vessels now waiting at the port for loading and unloading operation have alleged that they feel insecure as pirates are rampant at the port. Besides, loading and unloading operation of imported and exported goods are often delayed due to labour unrest which is also a factor why the port is incurring financial loss over the years.

Knowledgeable sources believe that efficient handling of the affairs can only heal the wounds. Labour unrests are frequent deadlocking port activities at least once a month, said an importer.

In fact, two major problems are creating obstruction in the development of Mongla Port. One is created by man, while the other is by nature, said a high official of Mongla Port Authority.

The man-created problems can be solved easily if there is no lack of sincerity. Strike is a created problem which must be removed, at any cost keeping in view the interest of the country is no smaller than the interest of striking port workers.

It is alleged that port users are being harassed by the Customs officials on different pleas. They have complained against piloting and engineering sections which largely contribute to undesirable situation sometimes paralysing the port activities.

One of the leading port users said that captains of foreign vessels do not want to lodge any complaint to the concerned police station against the pirates fearing retaliation in the long run.

Credibility gap is gradually widening between captains of foreign vessels and officials of Mongla Port Authority. This must be removed to help build up good relations with foreign countries, said a C & F Agent of

the port. Dredging problem has already taken an alarming turn at the port forcing foreign ships to think otherwise.

There is no permanent dredging system like other ports in the world. As a result, many foreign countries have already expressed their reluctance to load or unload goods at Mongla Port.

The 46-year old port is yet to attain international status due to lack of expected development and proper planning.

According to a spokesman of Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry, import activities must be allowed through Mongla Port so that importers of Khulna, Rajshahi and Barisal divisions are not financially affected and may largely contribute to revenue earning of the country.

The port's infrastructure needs to be redeveloped for giving sufficient incentives to financial institutions and commercial institutes. It will help solve unemployment problems, said a source.

Knowledgeable sources further believe that space at Mongla Port can not be increased without an airport, EPZ, the proposed Rupsha bridge-and rail communication.

We can extend active co-operation to the government in developing Mongla Port as one of the best ports in the world, said the president of Mongla Port Users' Association. Because, we find bright economic prospect if the port is treated in that perspective, he observed.

A section of corrupt officials are undermining financial interest of the country by doing nothing good to the port. They are allegedly committing several offences detrimental to the interest of export-import trade. Some of them are serving for long in violation of The Inter-Port Transfer Ordinance.

It is believed that services of coast guards must not be limited to the areas of loading and unloading operation. It should be extended up to Hiron Point for stopping pilferage, smuggling and piracy.

From The Court Room

Teen violator gets life term

BHOLA, Oct 1: A man was awarded life term imprisonment for violating a teenage girl at Borhanuddin thana of the district, reports UNB.

According to the prosecution story, the convict Seraj Talukder along with his accomplices abducted the girl while she was returning home with her father at the night of June 6 this year.

She was taken to a nearby place and violated one after another. Later her relatives rescued her in a critical condition.

The victim filed a case against the accused on the following day and police after investigation submitted charge-sheet.

After examining the witnesses and records, the District and Sessions Judge AK Mohammad Ali delivered the judgement on September 22.

One gets 10-yr for possessing illegal arms, ammunition

From Our Correspondent KISHOREGANJ, Oct 1: One person was convicted to suffer 10 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for possessing unauthorised arms and ammunition.

AKM Mostafa Dewan, Assistant Sessions and Special Tribunal Judge of Kishoreganj in a judgment delivered on Sunday convicted Abul Kashem of village Kamalapur under Bhairsthana under Section 19 (A) and 19 (F) of Arms Act.

The judge also fined him Taka 3,000 in default to suffer one year RI more, court sources said.

According to the prosecution on the night of April 17 in 1995, Bhairsthan police arrested Abul Kashem in connection with a case and on the basis of his confessional statement police later recovered one country made pipe gun and one round of ammunition from his house.

Middlemen behind fish scarcity in Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 1: Scarcity of fish has become acute in the markets throughout the district throwing consumers in disarray.

Scarcity of fish has become acute as almost 80 per cent of the fish caught from the rivers and beels are being purchased by the middle traders or brokers for sending them to Dhaka, Rajshahi and other places. Production of fish in the water-bodies has also declined despite the massive propaganda that pisciculture was being developed everywhere.

A lawyer from Faridpur thana said that observation of "Fish Fortnight" and holding of fish melas appeared simply to be mockeries to the millions of consumers as they find the fish markets, even during its peak season, running without fish.

An old fish merchant of Pabna town, Abdul Jalil, having conducted the business in Pabna market for over long 50 years, told this correspondent that according to his experience and observations, fish supply

in Pabna market alone has reduced to nearly 50 per cent and on the other hand, the population, during the same period, has been doubled and hence this crisis.

When asked about the reasons, Abdul Jalil, widely known to all the people of the town, narrated that fish production had fallen severely due to drying up of most of the water-bodies including the rivers — both big and small — the beels, the ponds. He with his vast experience said that although crores of fish fries were being released every year by the government and non-government agencies (NGOs), individuals also joined the race. The concerned water bodies were getting dry within three to four months after the release of fries. The released fish fries cannot grow and the people also catch those immature fish for fear of being stolen or for facing premature death due to want of adequate water. He also stated that the middlemen engaged in the trading of fish at various levels were now the main factor

in abnormal rise in the prices of fish and causing immense sufferings to the real consumers on the one hand and also throwing the fishermen producing fish in the field level to misery as they were not getting proper price for their labour. Thus, the growers were being discouraged and frustrated both in the production and catching of fish while the consumers in general were turning into victims of abnormal price hike.

The District Fisheries Officer (DFO) Pabna said that they were all busy with their work in the field in different thanas. The District Fisheries Officer was not available on any day. One cashier of the office every-time was found to attend the telephone call and he always replied that the DFO has gone to the field. This is a daily feature that has been continuing for months together. When asked whether he or anyone else in the office could supply the information, he told that none but the District Fisheries Officer could give the information.

Khulna citizens suffer Overloading makes 60 pc transformers faulty

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 1: Most of the electric transformers of the city are in an awkward position due to lack of proper maintenance and security. At least sixty per cent transformers are out of order, failing to bear the burden of over loading, according to concerned authorities.

Over one thousand domestic consumers of some areas alleged that electricity supply in their respective areas remaining suspended for hours together for delaying repairing works of the faulty transformers.

The transformers of 100,200,250, 400 and 500 KV set up at different areas for meeting the requisite demand of the subscribers (consumers) remain overloaded. Because, theft of electricity by false connections allegedly bringing a section of PDB officials and metre readers is rampant. As a result, the transformers go out of order frequently.

According to a highly placed source of PDB, it is a rule to examine the transformers every

six months. Besides, technicians are supposed to examine off and on transformers are over-loaded or not.

But this is never done, said the same source. Rather, concerned officials neglect their duties and reject complain of consumers.

There are reports that lack of experienced men in the electricity Supply Department of PDB is creating serious problems in handling these affairs. In addition, theft of fuel from the transformers is often alleged.

Truck hits bicyclist, dies

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 1: An old man was killed when a truck hit his bicycle at New Dhaka Road in the town Monday morning, reports UNB.

Police said Khorsheed Ali, 55, a leader of the district Fourth Class Employees' Association, died on the spot.

Novel way of protest

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 1: The officers of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) have devised a novel way of making a protest. They have decided not to take lunch and instead send their lunch to the bazaar of Hajrat Shah Mokhdum for the beggars to protest the alleged threats of the contractors to the Superintending Engineer (SE) of the corporation.

They will also arrange a *mid-mahfil* today.

At an emergency meeting of the Rajshahi City Corporation Officers' Association yesterday evening, the association leaders said they would show patience despite what they said, the provocative activities of the contractors.

The RCC Contractors' Association had earlier demanded expulsion of the SE for his alleged misbehaviour and corruption.

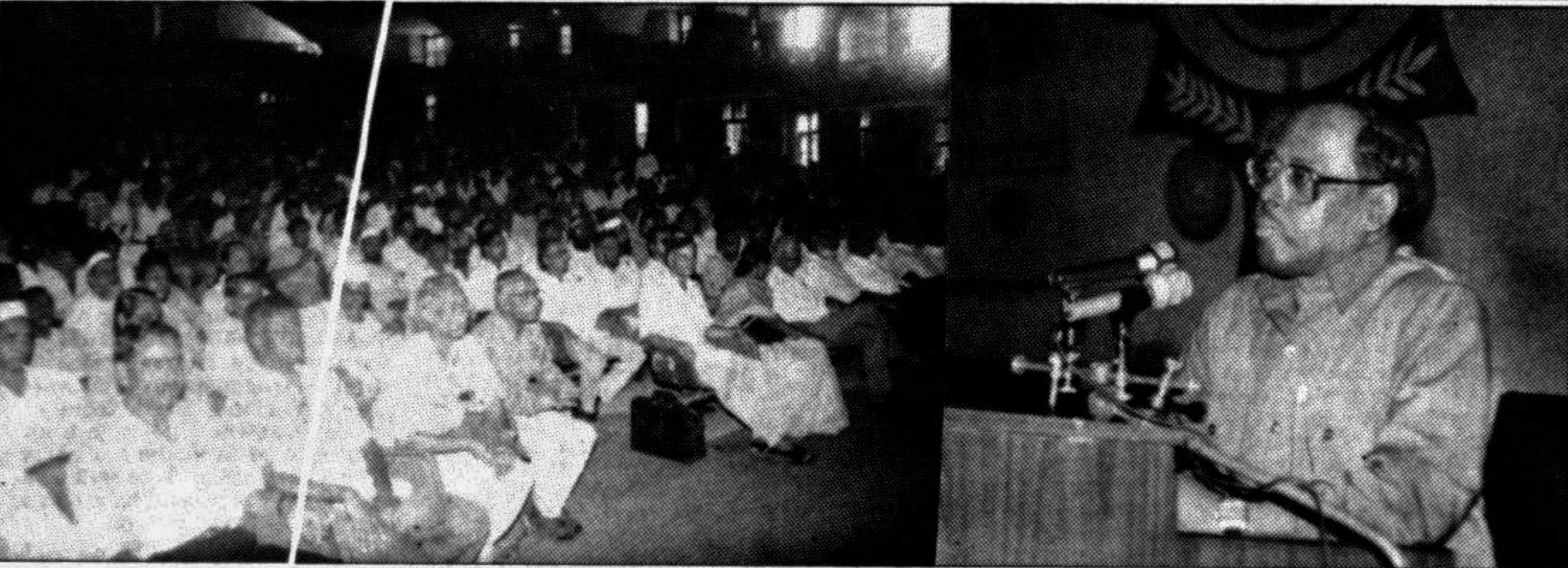
Half done road construction work left incomplete for last 12 yrs

BANDARBAN, Oct 1: Development works of five roads in the district, which started in 1984, could not be completed yet due to alleged irregularities of a section of officials and contractors, reports UNB.

District Road and Transport Department sources said although Tk 75.21 crore had been spent for construction of 191.40 km road till June, 1995, one fourth work for the road are yet to be completed.

The roads are 54.72 km long Bandarban-Chimbuk-Ruma road, 29.92 km long Bandarban-Bangla Halia (Jhankkhal) road, 22.53 km Bandarban-Bomangechhari road, 32 km long Aziznagar-Gazala road, 12 km long Ramu-Naikkhanchhari and 40.23 km long Chimbuk-Thanchhi road.

Local people alleged that deplorable condition of these incomplete roads was causing serious problem for town dwellers as cracks have developed at many points of the roads hampering the movements of vehicles and pedestrians.



AGRI-VARSITY (My mensingh): Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Shah, Muhammad Farouk delivering his speech as chief guest at the inaugural function of the Orientation Programme arranged for the newly admitted first year students of the Bangladesh Agricultural University held at BAU auditorium recently.

Two elephants killed in border land mine explosion

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 1: Two wild elephants were killed in explosion of land mine in the border area of Naik hangchhari thana of Bandarban district on Saturday. The mine were allegedly laid by Naka aka Force of Myanmar, an UNB report says.

Local people rushed to the spot hearing the sound of two explosions from (Chaktala and Ghrangdhum vil lages of the thana and found the decapitated bodies of the animals.

Osmani Medical College classes from Oct 5

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Oct 1: Classes in the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College will resume from October 5. The decision was taken at a meeting of the college Academic Council yesterday.

The students have been asked to identify the hostels after showing identity cards from October 4.

The college was closed since die on August 25 following clashes between the activists of the pro-government BCL and the pro-FNP, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

Manpower shortage hits health service

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Oct 1: Activities of Health Department are being hampered severely in Jhenidah district for want of sufficient manpower for the last few years, the District Civil Surgeon said.

Talking to this correspondent the Civil Surgeon said posts of 64 health Assistants out of required 245 have been lying vacant since 1992. Some 60 Health Assistants were recruited by the District Civil Surgeon office in the same year. But some of the candidates who failed to be recruited, filed cases with court that the examination was not held impartially. Since then they are not in a position to fill in the posts.

Further posts of four Health Inspectors out of required 49 are lying vacant. As a result, health service activities in grassroot level have been hampered badly.

Posts of Senior Consultant of Midwifery and Medical Officer of TB and leprosy units at Jhenidah sadar hospital, Dental Surgeons in all five thana health complexes, two Medical Officers (MO) in Sialkupa Thana Health complex, three MOs in Harinakundu Thana Health Complex, two in Kali-ganj Thana Health Complex, two in Health Sub-Centres of Cothandpur Thana and posts of three Medical Officers in three subcentres of Moheshpur

Alleged pilferage of fertiliser being investigated

From Our Correspondent

LALMONIRHAT, Oct 1: District Anti-corruption Bureau has been investigating allegations against a fertiliser dealer of Patgram thana for submitting false documents and selling fertiliser in the black markets, reports UNB.

Local Agriculture office sources said the dealer, Sonargona Variety Store, raised some 400 metric tons of fertiliser for distribution among the farmers of the locality in the month of August.

The dealer brought 250 metric tons of fertiliser at his godown in the thana headquarters and the rest 150 metric tons allegedly sold out in black markets.

The thana Agriculture Officer sent several show cause notices to the dealer for not bringing the remaining fertiliser by August 31.

But the dealer allegedly submitted some false documents to the office in this regard.

After ascertaining the forgery, the Thana Agriculture Officer sought permission of the Deputy Director of Lalmonirhat Agriculture Department for lodging a complaint against the dealer with the thana.

Later, the District Anti-corruption Bureau took up the matter for investigation.

Abducted school girl rescued

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 1: A school girl, kidnapped earlier, was rescued by Karimganj police on September 23.

Police sources said, Shahan Akhtar, 12, daughter of Giasuddin of village Charitala in Karimganj thana and a student of class VI of Niamatpur High School was kidnapped by a group of miscreants while she was on way to the school on September 7 last. Since then, she remained untraced.

Teachers, students demand reopening of IU

From Our Correspondent

KUSHIATIA, Oct 1: The recent death of Aminur Rahman, 22, a third year student of Al-Quran Department of Islamic University and an activist of Chhatra Shibir following a fierce clash between the ruling party backed Chhatra League and Chhatra Shibir on IU campus on September 26 has created a serious crisis in the academic atmosphere of the university.

Chhatra Shibir meanwhile, has announced a series of programmes in protest against killing of their fellow activist. They observed a half day hartal on Saturday both in Kushtia and Jhenidah which was successfully implemented. Their next programme was to gherao the Vice-Chancellor's office yesterday which was also implemented with the handing over of a memorandum containing their demands.

Today they will gherao the offices of Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia and Jhenidah, according to a press release of the Chhatra Shibir.

Meanwhile, University authority has declared the IU closed, since die following the fierce clashes in which 300 rounds of gun fire were exchanged and 85 Chhatra League activists and 135 activists of Chhatra Shibir were injured.

The Shibir activists brought out procession both at Kushtia and Jhenidah chanting slogans demanding immediate reopening of the university. They also demanded arrest and trial of those responsible for the killing of Aminur Rahman.

Meanwhile, Vice-Chancellor has issued a press note with regard to the incident in which the University has been declared

closed and students were asked to vacate the halls. The entire situation was brought to the notice of the Education Minister.

The Press Note said that an enquiry committee would be formed to investigate into the matter as soon as possible.

In the mean time, Islamic University Teachers Association (IUTA) held an emergency meeting on September 27 and the situation was discussed there. The meeting expressed deep concern over the death of Aminur Rahman and condemned the incident unequivocally. Teachers also condoned the sad demise of the meritorious student and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and sympathised with the members of the bereaved family.

The teachers also demanded immediate arrest of those responsible for the incident after making a judicial inquiry and exemplary punishment of the accused persons.

Eye camp at tea estate

The Chandpore Central Hospital of Duncan Brothers organised a six-day long eye camp for the tea estate labourers in collaboration with BNSB, Moulvibazar from 19 to 21 September.

In the camp 150 patients were treated while 38 people underwent operation. Labourers from 13 different estates took the opportunity of the eye camp which was inaugurated by IA Khan, Manager-in-Charge of Chandpore Tea Estate, says a press release.

Govt medical service in complete disarray

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Oct 1: The health service under government management in Moulvibazar district paints a gloomy picture due to shortage of physicians and staffers, accommodation problem, scarcity of medicine, absence of surgery department and poor allocation of grants.

There is a 50-bed sadar hospital in the district headquarters, another 50-bed hospital at Sreemongal thana headquarters, six thana health complexes (THC) and 20 union health sub-centres in Moulvibazar district for about 15 lakh people.

According to the Civil Surgeon's office sources, a total of 102 posts of different categories of physicians and other office staffers at various hospitals and thana health complexes are lying vacant for long. Besides, two union health sub-centres have been engulfed by the river erosion.

The Moulvibazar sadar hospital was upgraded into a 50-bed one in 1984 and shifted to new area. In terms of the demand the medical house is not capable of meeting the requirements of the patients.

When contacted, a medical officer of the Civil Surgeon's office told that in fact, the rush of patients in Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital is very high these days.

The hospital actually needs to be upgraded to a 250-bed hospital with adequate number of physicians including specialists.

never found below 75 although — according to the doctors, many patients are refused admission and many others are released before the patients recover.

The hospital source said, development work of infrastructure has been completed to convert the Moulvibazar sadar hospital into a 100-bed one, and 50 beds more were already been installed. But newly installed 50 beds are lying unused for want of approval by the Ministry of Health.

However, a total of 11 physicians of different categories including specialists are working in sadar hospital. Of them three are consultant physicians, one dental surgeon, one radiologist and one pathologist and rest five are graduate medical officers. Number of physicians are quite inadequate in regards of increasing number of patients. There is no physician in the Emergency Section. Physicians from other sections are doing duty in the emergency unit on shift basis.

The post of X-ray machine operator is lying vacant. There is an ECG machine which went out of order for long.

The Civil Surgeon of the district allegedly purchased an anaesthesia machine at his own initiative for the operation theatre a few months ago. But within a few days of installation, fault was detected in the machine. Besides this, there is no arrangement of oxygen cylinders in the operation theatre of the hospital. Though it is known as a modernised hospital Moulvibazar sadar hospital has no intensive care unit. As a

result patients requiring surgery were passing time uncared.

It is also alleged that, taking opportunity of this situation some physicians of the sadar hospital who are also working at local private clinics as part timer are reportedly advising the patients to seek treatment in the clinics. Local clinics are depending solely upon the recommendations by the physicians of the sadar hospital. The hospital is not getting adequate and sincere services from them, it is widely alleged.

However, the Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital conducts minor operations, though there is arrangement of major operations. Especially poor patients are being deprived from the service as different instruments and machines of operation theatre often go out of order. Even after repairing, these machine again go inoperative.

In absence of a blood bank, the patients have to collect blood from the Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital and sometimes patients in critical condition die as blood cannot be provided in due time it was alleged by a number of staffers.

In 1993, a blood bank was opened, but it was closed down due to lack of interest of blood donors.

Scarcity of all kinds of medicine posed a great problem in the hospital. Poor patients are the worst sufferers as they cannot afford to purchase medicines from the markets. Taking the opportunity of shortage of medicines in the sadar hospital, large number of pharmacy and drug houses have

been opened in front of the hospital.

Where are the monthly allocated medicines being used? it is a big question by the patients or their relations. During a recent visit to the Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital by this correspondent no indoor patients were found to get medicine from the hospital management. The outdoor patients seeking treatment were found saying — they were only getting prescriptions from the physicians. In some cases, medicines like Paracetamol, Metronidazole and Antacid being supplied.

The hospital sources said, the government has been allocating Taka 9 lakh only as annual grant for Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital.

But this allocation is too poor to maintain the normal activities of the hospital, hospital sources said. To fulfil the normal requirements, allocation for Sreemongal 50-bed hospital is being converted to the sadar hospital.

There is a TB clinic at district headquarters with a physician. But the patients were given only prescriptions from the TB clinic as it is being said — stock of medicine remains empty.

Two union health sub-centres under sadar thana — one at Buddhimontapur and another at Monumukh were engulfed by the river. These centres were being run in temporary places.

The six thana health complexes (THC), all have been suffering from shortage of physicians and other staffers and medicines.

Health Complex (THC), posts of one Medical Officer, two Medical Assistants, two Pharmacists, two Laboratory Technicians, one Health Inspector, three Assistant Health Inspectors, two Health Assistants and one post of MLSS were lying vacant.

Though all the THCs are entitled with both the outdoor and indoor treatment, but Moulvibazar sadar THC have no indoor or outdoor service. Only EPI service is being given from this THC. People of the sadar thana have been demanding at least 50-bed indoor service and outdoor treatment facility in sadar THC.

There is a 50-bed hospital in Sreemongal thana headquarters. For want of physicians and medicines — patient service from this hospital is about to be closed. Annual government allocation for this hospital is Taka 9 lakh, which are being used in Moulvibazar sadar hospital, it was learnt from the sadar hospital sources.

Posts of three out of five Medical Officers, one Staff Nurse and one Head Assistant were lying vacant. Instruments and machines are also lying unused in this hospital.

The thana health complex at Sreemongal has six posts of physicians which are lying vacant. Of this, one Dental Surgeon, one Gynaecologist, three Medical Officers and one Medical Assistant. Besides this, 12 posts of third class employees are also lying vacant in Sreemongal THC.

The condition of the Kamalgonj Thana Health Complex is

also extremely miserable. There is no ambulance. The doors and windows were found damaged. The Kamalgonj THC needs major renovation.

Three out of eleven posts of physicians of different categories are lying vacant at Kamalgonj THC. Besides this, 15 posts of third class employees were also lying vacant. Patients were getting only prescription from this THC as it is reported that allocation of medicine is too poor to run the indoor and outdoor service.

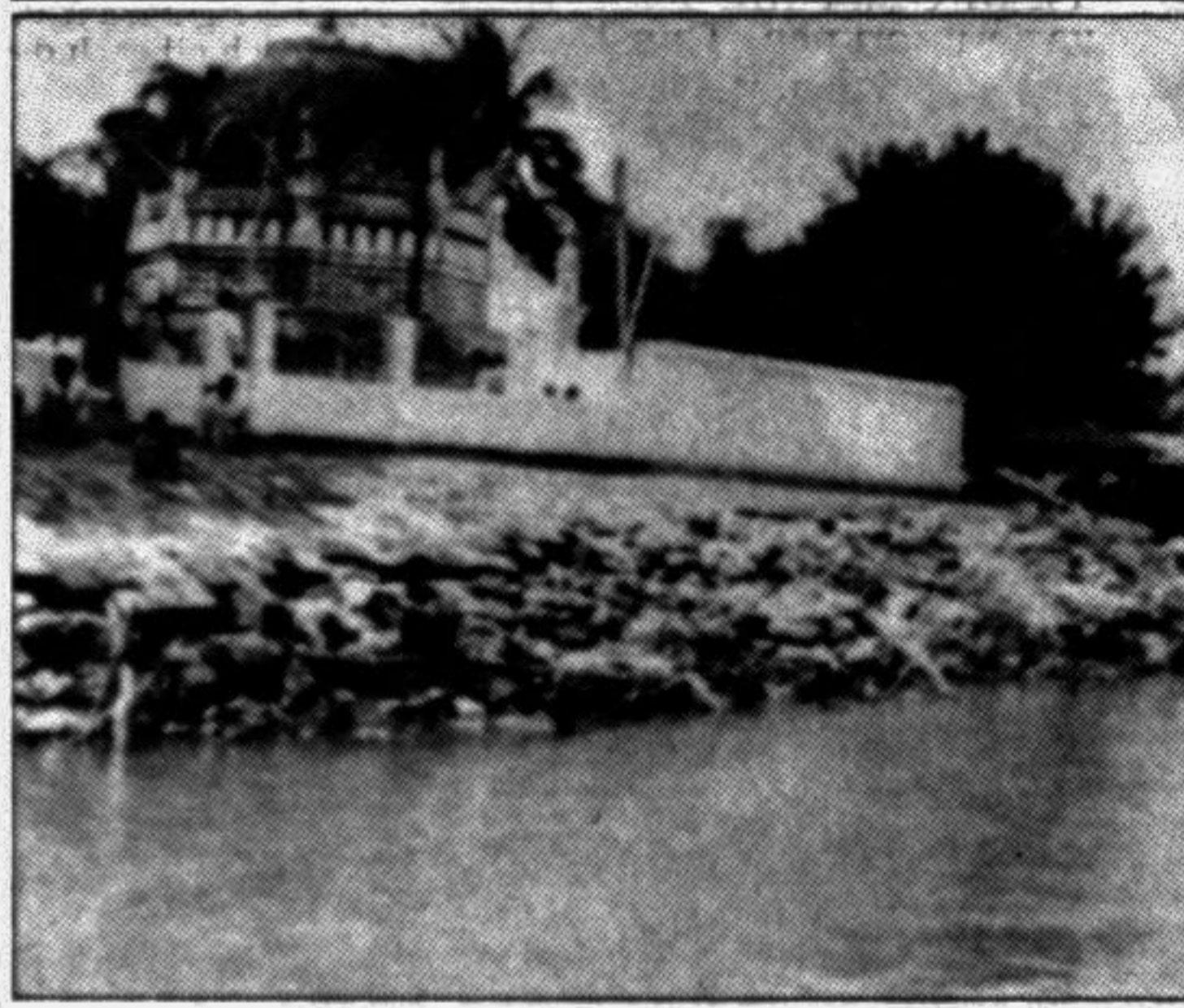
The Kulara THC is facing crisis of physicians, medicines and medical equipment like the other THCs.

Three out of thirteen posts of physicians are lying vacant. Some of the posts include a Medicine Specialist, a Dental Surgeon and a Medical Officer. Besides this 15 posts of third class employees are also lying vacant.

The Kulara THC source said, an electric steriliser is badly needed in this THC. On the other hand, existing dental chair and X-ray machine went out of order.

There are no X-ray machine and operation light in Rajnagar Thana Health Complex (THC). Medical service is greatly hampered due to shortage of physicians. Of them one post of Surgical Specialist and three Medical Officer are lying vacant.

More or less same situation is prevailing at Baralekha THC where two posts of physicians and ten posts of third class employees are lying vacant. There is no operation light and Dental Chair in Baralekha THC, it was learnt from the THC source.



PABNA: The mosque and mazar of Shah Makhdum bearing historical and architectural glory is now under severe threat of erosion by the river Karatoa in Shahzadpur. Attempts were made to save them by dumping concrete blocks but menace of the mighty river could not be stopped. — Star photo