

Cash, valuables worth Tk 1 lakh looted from coach

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, May 23: A band of dacoits swooped on a night coach passengers and looted cash and valuables worth about Tk one lakh at Alamkhali Bazar on Dhaka-Khulna highway early Wednesday.

Passengers said the highwaymen, numbering 8-10, boarded the Meherpur-bound coach in guise of passengers and took control of the bus when it reached Alamkhali Bazar in Magura district.

The looters beat up the passengers indiscriminately and looted cash and other belongings, leaving seven people injured.

The bus driver and his helper were among the injured. They were admitted to the Jhenidah Sadar Hospital with stab injuries.

A case was filed with Sadar thana in this connection.

2 commit suicide in Habiganj

HABIGANJ, May 23: Two people, one of them a young housewife, allegedly committed suicide in Nabiganj thana on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police said Nibasini Das, 25, of Alampur Chargaon village in Nabiganj thana killed herself by dousing kerosine and setting fire to her body.

Nibasini, wife of one Rana Das, had a quarrel with her husband on the day, which was said to be the sequel to their long time feuding.

In another incident, Jiten-dra Sarker, 32, of Rampur village in the same thana committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree for unknown reason.

Later, the autopsy of the deceased were done at Habiganj Sadar hospital. Separate cases were filed with Nabiganj thana.

44 BCP activists sued for conspiring to overthrow govt

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, May 23: Police have filed a case with Kotwali thana against 44 members of the armed cadres of Biplobi Communist Party including its leader Lalan on the allegation of over throwing the present elected government by armed revolution and thereby capturing the state power. Eight members of the party are now in police custody. The Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali filed the case himself being complainant on May 2.

According to report, acting on a tip off a contingent of police led by OC Kotwali, went on a raid to Kashimpur and Konajpur to track down the terrorists.

They arrested eight persons including Mohsin, Atiar, Badar Mohidul, Aziz, Monirul, Azizur, Badal Biswas and recovered various papers of the party in support of their conspiracy to destroy the government.

2 killed in Sherpur road accident

SHERPUR, May 23: Two people were killed and 30 others injured in a road accident on Sherpur-Dhaka highway near Bairaparanpur in Sadar thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said the accident occurred at about 2.30 pm when an overloaded Sherpur-bound minibus from Mymensingh overturned as the driver tried to save a cow.

A 28-year-old unidentified man died on the spot while an old man, Maqbul Mandal, succumbed to his injuries at Sherpur Hospital.

The injured were admitted to Sherpur Hospital from where six shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Transport strike in Sylhet continues

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 23: The transport workers and owners continued their strike in the district for the second day Thursday. They went on strike to protest what they said "unauthorised" collection of tolls from the trucks carrying stones from the quarries in Gowainghat thana.

Leaders of Sylhet district transport owners group and transport workers associations at a press conference at the Sylhet Press Clubin afternoon alleged that district police administration took no action against those responsible for the illegal toll collection, violating a rule issued by a High Court Bench on May 14, 1997.

Transport strike continues in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, May 23: The nonstop transport strike, called by the district transport workers' union, continued for the second day Thursday, reports UNB.

The strike was called on Tuesday protesting the killing of a transport worker.

Tension was mounting in the town as a group of terrorists captured the office of the striking transport workers on Wednesday night.

Meanwhile, president of the union Mokaddem went into hiding after the terrorists threatened to kill him.



The men are trading lobster fry—once available in plenty in the coastal rivers of Sundarbans. Booming shrimp export business from the country's coastal districts lead to its high demand. Its prices spiralled too. But the fact remains that massive catching of the fry gradually restricted spawning by the mother shellfish—locally known as *baghda* shrimp. According to biologists, the nature of spawning has now changed. A mother lobster, which lays eggs in the fresh (slightly saline) river waters of Sundarbans now mostly spend its spawning time in the Bay which largely make it difficult for the fries to grow in the high tides in the sea. Ultimately this has hit the lobster fry production in the country apart from facing the environmental damage done to its population due to high salinity and pollution of the river waters.

— Star photo by AKM Mohsin

Half of the total number of villages in Sylhet Div have no primary schools

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SHLYET, May 23: As many as 5,500 villages in the four districts of Sylhet Division have no primary schools depriving the eligible children from benefit of education. This picture is seriously affecting implementation of the government planned, Compulsory Primary Education Programme, better known as, CPEP.

According to an official statistics, the total number of villages in the division stands at 10,101 while the number of both government and non-government primary schools is 4607. There is no school in 5,494 villages in 4 districts, the statistics say.

Sylhet district is comprised of 101 unions in 11 thanas where the total number of villages is 3259. The total number of both government and non-government primary schools is 1320. There are 1939 villages in

the district where there is no school.

There are 2,812 villages in 84 unions of 10 thanas of Sunamganj district. The number of both government and non-government primary schools in the district is 1321. There is no primary school in 1491 villages here, the statistics show.

Moulvibazar district is comprised of six thanas having 72 unions with 1962 villages. The number of primary schools here is 1006 while 956 villages lack any primary school.

The district of Habiganj is comprised of eight thanas with 40 unions. There are 2068 villages here where the number of schools stands at 960. As many as 1108 villages lack any school in the district.

Meanwhile, the speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury has said that, a total of 432 new primary

schools would be set up in Sylhet sadar, Fenchuganj and Compangyanj thanas under a special programme within the next three years.

Referring to his recent meeting with the German Ambassador the speaker last week said that, the mentioned number of schools would be set up with special assistance from German government. About three million US dollar is expected to be spent for the construction of the new school buildings and furniture, he added. Of the total, 325 schools would be set up in Sadar thana, 67 in Compangyanj thana and 41 would be in the Fenchuganj thana, the Speaker said.

Meanwhile, the authority of the primary education in the division has also been suffering badly for long. Though normally, the number of provisioned posts of teachers for a primary school is at least four,

it is reportedly not followed in any of the schools here, sources alleged.

When contacted, an official of the Primary Education Department admitted that, there are a number of schools where only two teachers are working.

There is at least 260 schools in Sylhet district having only two teachers in each causing much inconvenience for normal functioning. Besides, a number of schools have been running with vacant posts of teachers for years together.

Primary education officials informed that six posts of thana education officers and 29 posts of assistant education officers have been lying vacant for long while the number of vacant post of head masters stand at 90 and the number of assistant teachers in the district of Sylhet is 105, the source added.

Eleven nationalised jute mills face closure in Khulna zone

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, May 23: Erratic power supply and constant loadshedding has seriously affected production works of eleven jute mills of Khulna zone. According to Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) sources, eleven jute mills of Khulna zone has incurred financial loss of about one hundred crore taka in last four months due to power disruption and loadshedding.

If this alarming situation continues, all the jute mills under BJMC will be closed down by July, 1997 at the latest, the source said. As a result, over

forty thousand workers will be losing their jobs.

The jute mills have been suffering from loadshedding since February that resulted in the fall of normal production and payment of salaries and wages without any works.

A high official of BJMC, Khulna zone told The Daily Star that production in the eleven jute mills had to be slashed from its daily target. In the first week of the current month only 1,253 metric tonnes were produced instead of production target of 3,300 metric tonnes per day in the eleven

jute mills due to loadshedding incurring loss of about six crore taka.

The BJMC official alleged that power connections were snapped by the PDB on different pleas including non-payment of arrears bills thus creating serious obstruction in production works in some of the jute mills.

The source also said that these jute mills could not achieve even twenty per cent of the daily production target during last four months. Because, power supply to these mills was cut even by violating rationing system as committed by the

PDB. Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) leaders of the jute mills said that labour unrest is knocking the doors unless immediate steps are not taken to keep the jute mills fully operational. Government subsidy is badly needed to save the mills from closure, they added.

Meanwhile, families members of officials have been shifted outside the mill areas fearing panic and spread of violence. They are apprehending of being kept hostage by the workers who are preparing for severe movement.

89 pc Rural Structural Dev Projects completed in Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, May 23: Progress of all the 131 Rural Structural Development Projects, taken up under Food for Works Programme (FWP) in all the 8 thanas of the district during the current fiscal was said to be good. Over 89 per cent of the total work has been completed and rest of the work is expected to be completed well ahead of dead line June 30.

A source of local district relief and rehabilitation office told The Daily Star that a total of 131 projects were taken up against allocation of wheat work 2619 metric tons (MT), under general programme.

According to the source in Obhainagar, a total of 19 projects were taken up against wheat allocations of 273 metric tons, in Bagherpara 12 projects were taken up and wheat sanctioned was 225 MT in Chowgachha 19 projects were taken up and wheat sanctioned there for was 242 MT, in Jhinkergachha, 12 projects were taken up and quantity of wheat allocated was 314 MT, in Keshabpur, 11 projects were taken against wheat worth 266 MT, in Jessore sadar number of projects taken were 15 and wheat

sanctioned was 520 MT, in Monirampur, 18 projects were taken and wheat allocated was 434 MT while in Sharsha projects were 25 and wheat was 345 MT.

Under special allocation of wheat under the same programme another 100 projects were taken in all the eight thanas of the district against allocations of wheat worth 1905 metric tons in current season.

According to detailed information eight projects were taken up in Obhainagar thana and wheat worth 124 MT was sanctioned, 17 projects were taken up in Bagherpara and wheat sanctioned was 198 MT. In Chowgachha, projects were 17 and wheat was 157 MT. In Jhinkergachha the projects were 14 and wheat was 157 MT. In Keshabpur projects were 11 and wheat was 307 MT. In Jessore sadar 10 projects were taken up and 334 MT wheat was sanctioned. In Monirampur number of projects taken were 8 and wheat allocated was 314 MT and in Sharsha equal amount of wheat was allocated while the projects were 17. Wheat worth 684 MT were allocated against total of 386 projects taken up in eight thanas of the district for rural maintenance work under test relief during the current fiscal.

Allegations received from different areas say that in implementing the project work. The principles of methodology guiding work were not followed by the Project Implementation Committee (PIC). Allegation say that the labourers were given cash money in line of their labour and not wheat as told in the methodology of the project implementation work.

The source on condition of anonymity told that where as the market price of wheat at present is more than the cost of earth work done per 1000 cft. It was profitable for the PIC to settle labourers due in terms of cash money.

When this allegations was brought to the notice of district relief and rehabilitation officer, Moslem Uddin Howladar, he told The Daily Star that it was the affair of labourers to decide whether they would receive their dues either in terms of wheat or cash. In this respect they had in fact no role.

Tragic end of an illicit love affair

From Our Correspondent

MEHERPUR, May 23: Angered by the illicit affair of his wife, an angry husband in sadar thana allegedly killed his wife's lover in their bedroom on Wednesday night.

Police said Abdus Salam was outraged seeing one Mahtabuddin with his wife Aayesha Khatun in their bed and hit him with a sharp weapon, leaving Mahtab dead on the spot.

Villagers said Aayesha, mother of two children, had long been maintaining an amorous relation with Mahtab, an allegation denied by Aayesha.

Salam was not in the house when Mahtab allegedly took his wife to bed. He went into hiding after the incident.

A case was filed with Meherpur thana. Police arrested Aayesha.

One pirate killed in exchange of fire with police

NARAYANGANJ, May 23: A pirate was killed and three people, including two constables, were injured in an exchange of fire between pirates and policemen here on Saturday night, reports UNB.

Police recovered a pipe gun and the looted goods from a boat abandoned by the pirates at a Shoal on the river Shitalakha on Sunday.

According to police, a gang of robbers swooped on MV Laila, an oil tanker, in the river Meghna at Gajaria thana at 11 pm on Saturday night and decamped with some valuables after beating the crew.

Later, the dacoits fired at Gajaria patrol police on being challenged and exchanged fire with them, which left on pirate killed and three people including two policemen and a boatman, injured. However, identity of the pirate could not be known immediately.

Another report says, a highway dacoit was nabbed with a short-gun from Nabiganj area in Bandar thana here on Saturday night.

Rajshahi will be a clean model city, hopes RCC Mayor

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, May 23: The authority of Rajshahi City Corporation has taken up extensive programmes to clean-up the city and hoped that it would be a model city in terms of a cleaner town.

The Mayor of the Rajshahi City Corporation, Mizanur Rahman Minu while exchanging views with some journalists and local elites said this today. He hoped that the city would be upgraded to a modern one and its streets and other places would be free from all sorts of 'unwanted' substances.

Minu added that manpower has been increased manifold to maintain regular clearing of the garbage. Special programmes have been taken up to clean garbage from every houses, shops, business establishments and government buildings every day. He added that garbage are being piled-up at one corner of the city and

being 'biodegraded' separating the substances which can not be decomposed.

He added, to keep the city clean a highly ambitious drainage project at a cost of Tk 22 crore is being implemented. The drainage project, which is expected to be completed soon, would cover the entire city corporation area.

The Mayor claimed that mosquito menace in the city areas has been reduced to quite an extent. It is now under control, he also claimed.

The Mayor, during his hour-long exchange of views with the newsmen also informed that he had under-taken a plan to rehabilitate 'floating girls'. He said 22 such girls have already been rehabilitated and given employment as sweepers.

In the end, Minu sought co-operation from all sectors for successful implementation of the programmes.

Tension at KU following expulsion of 2 students

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 23: Tension is prevailing on the campus of Khulna University following the expulsion of two students for their alleged involvement in terrorism recently.

According to KU official source, some outsiders with the help of armed criminals are attempting to disturb the peaceful atmosphere of the varsity getting support from some students residing in the Khanjahan Ali residential hall of the varsity.

Tension mounted when two innocent students were beaten by some non-students on April 20. In protest against this rowdism, the students of the varsity abstained from classes and held rallies and road blockade programmes. The movement was later called off after the KU authority assured stern action against the alleged terrorists.

It is alleged that outsiders are being harboured by a group

of students of the university. These outsiders stay in the Khanjahan Ali Hall. On the night of May 12 they beat mercilessly two meritorious students named, Asif and Sumon.

As a result, residents of Khanjahan Ali Hall took to the streets demanding exemplary punishment of the accused.

KU authority had to call for the help of the police on May 13 to drive armed outsiders out of the campus for diffusing the tension. Besides, seven unruly students were given warning on specific charges of resorting to terrorism on the campus.

But fact remains that the warned students are threatening some teachers. They are moving on the campus with armed outsiders creating lawlessness right under the nose of the riot police. As a result, general students are feeling insecure.

Pry education faces setback in M'bazar

From R K Goswami

MOULVIBAZAR, May 23: The goal of attaining Universal Primary Education for All by 2000 is far from satisfactory in the district.

Poor attendance of students in classes and shortage of primary school teachers stand in way of its success.

A survey, was conducted throughout the district recently. There are 2,43,950 children including 1,19,410 female children in the district eligible to go to schools. Of the total number, 35,978 children are from Baralekha thana, 60,551 from Kulaura thana, 33,604 from Rajnagar thana, 36,040 from Kamalgonj thana, 39,383 from Sreemongal thana and 38,394 children from the sadar thana.

According to the survey, a total of 2,26,766 children have enrolled their names in government and non-government primary schools, while another 17,184 children remain out of benefit of educational facilities in the district.

The thanawise break-up of enrolled students in primary schools are : In Baralekha 34,000, in Kulaura 57,962, in Rajnagar 30,878, in Kamalgonj 32,525, in Sreemongal 34,991 and in the sadar thana 36,490. Besides this, 1,978 children in Baralekha thana, 2,589 in Kulaura, 2,726 in Rajnagar, 3,515 in Kamalgonj, 4,472 in Sreemongal and 1,904 children in the sadar thana remain out

of educational facilities.

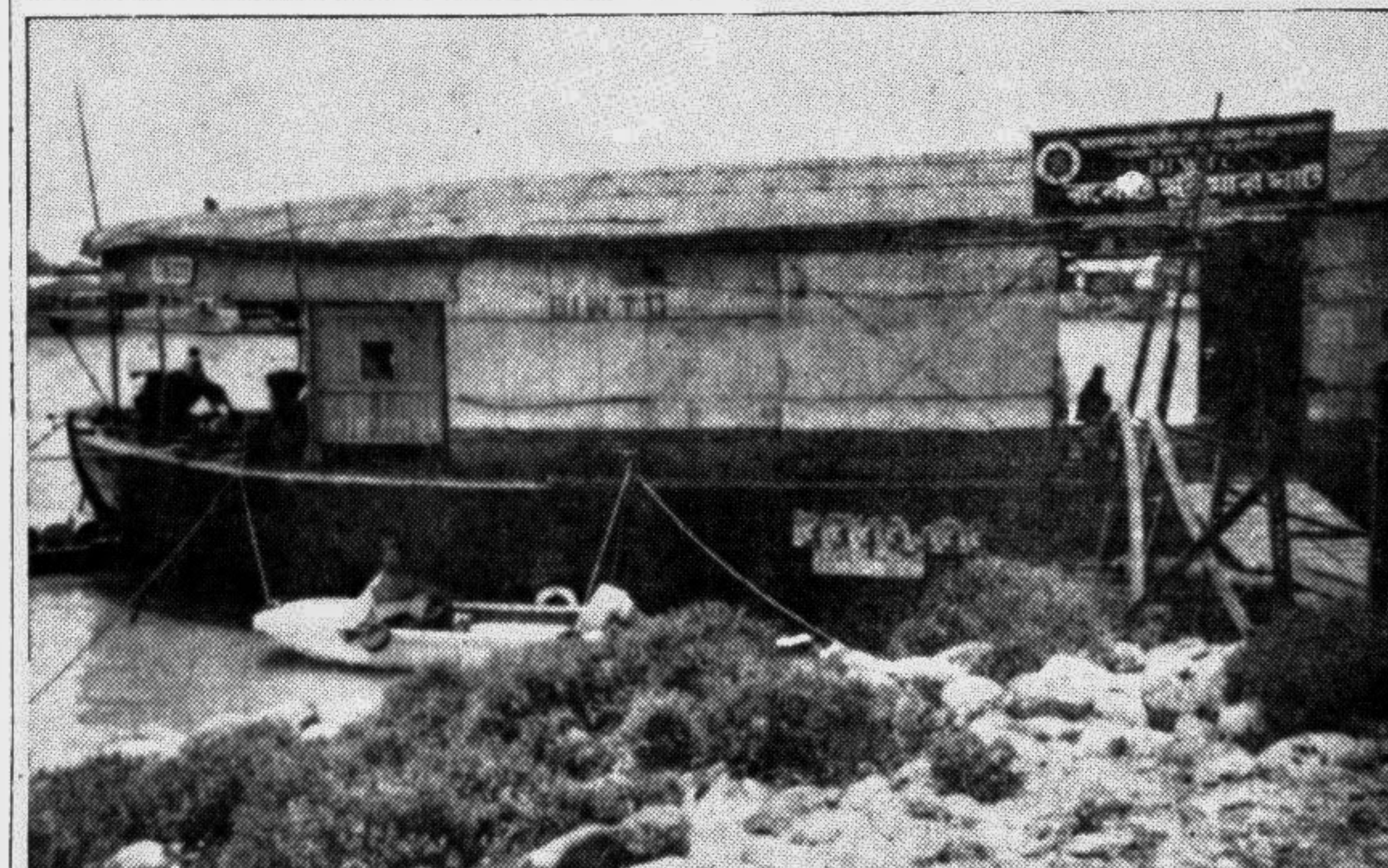
An official source further said, there are 993 government primary schools, 203 registered primary schools and 115 unregistered primary schools in six thanas of Moulvibazar district. These include 108 government, 42 registered and 4 unregistered primary schools in Baralekha thana, 163 government, 43 registered and 27 unregistered primary schools in Kulaura thana, 102 government, 22 registered and 13 unregistered primary schools in Rajnagar thana, 87 government, 54 registered and 20 unregistered primary schools in Kamalgonj thana, 66 government, 27 registered and 49 unregistered primary schools in Sreemongal thana and 167 government, 15 registered and 2 unregistered primary schools in the sadar thana. Both the registered and unregistered primary schools are under private management. The teachers of registered primary schools are getting financial help from the government and the teachers of unregistered primary schools are deprived of government help.

Life of these unregistered primary school teachers is very miserable. They are serving without salaries for years together. Most of the teachers of these unregistered primary schools are waiting for registration of their schools for a long time.

A total of 71,580 students are enrolled in both the registered and unregistered primary schools, under six thanas of the district. On the other hand a total of 1,55,216 students are enrolled in government primary schools in the district.

The district primary education office sources said, most of the enrolled children do not attend classes. The percentage of daily attendance is poor. According to the official statistics, it is only 66.83 per cent. The attendance of students in their classes is satisfactory only in those schools which are under the purview of Food for Education Programme (FEP). But a few schools have been brought under this programme in the district.

However, shortage of teachers is another problem in this sector. According to provision, one teacher is required for each 50 students of primary schools. But in Moulvibazar district the sanctioned posts of primary teachers at government primary schools are only 2303. Of these, 94 posts are laying vacant since long. To fulfil the teacher-student ratio at least 800 new posts of government primary teachers are urgently needed in Moulvibazar district alone. Besides this, 10 posts of Assistant Thana Education Officer (ATEO) and another 10 posts of office assistants are laying vacant.



CHANDPUR: The age of this rocket steamer terminal, located at the edge of river Dakatia connecting the mighty Meghna river, is said to be more than 50 years. Very little has been done to improve facilities on the floating condemned barge, belonging to Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation, an institution making reasonable profit from here. Regrettably, the authority concerned failed to provide basic amenities for the waiting passengers on the barge. There is no sitting arrangements on board. What is more disappointing is that there is no toilet on the barge. A frail looking narrow wooden bridge connects the barge and the main land near the popular fish market of Puran Bazar.

— Star photo by Shirin Akhter