

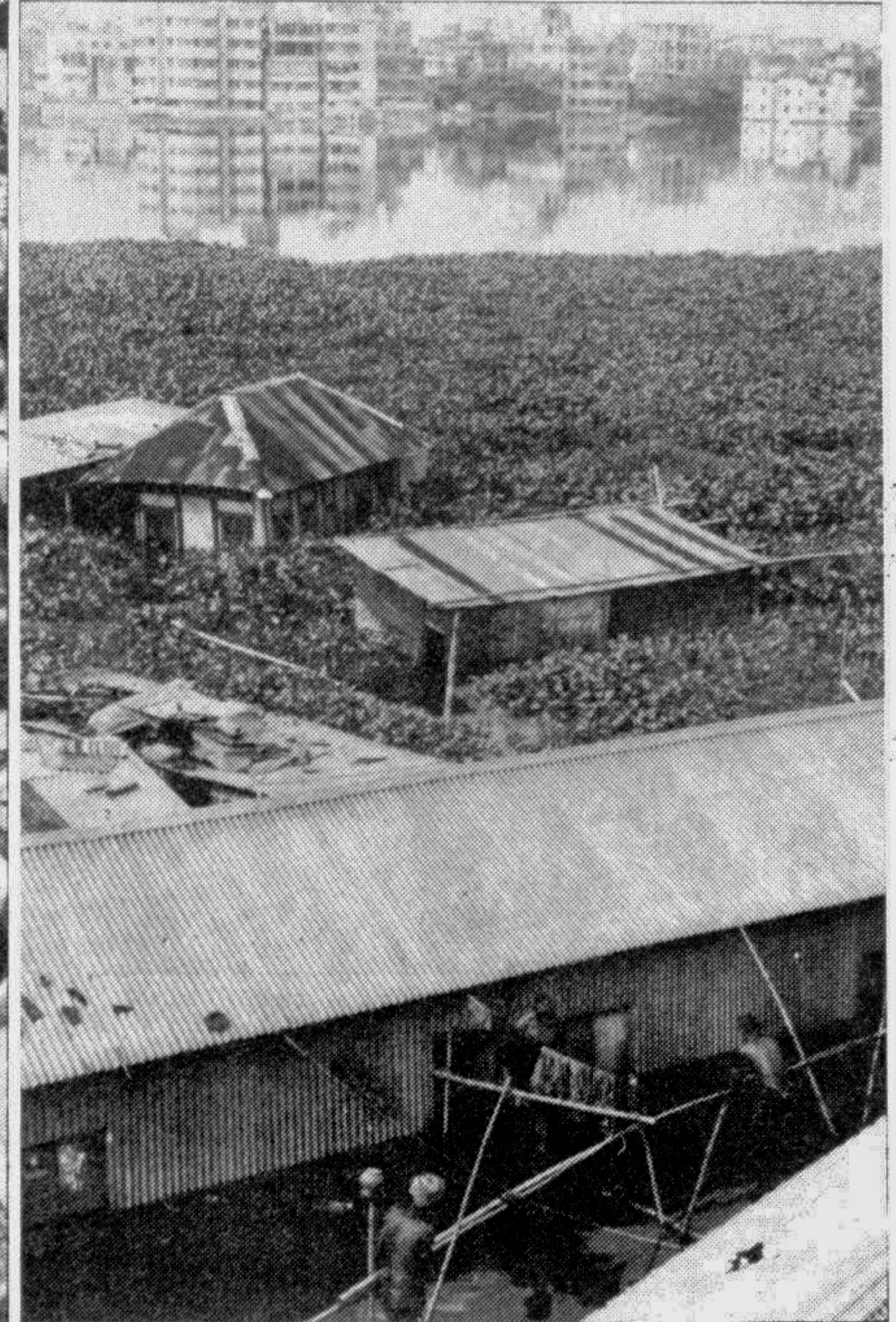
Dwelling in the Deluge



Waiting for Succour (Kamrangirchar)

— Star Photo by Amran Hossain

Photo Feature on Flood



Settlement to slum—all caught in catastrophe (Merul)

— Star photo by A KM Mohsin



Living on the roof (Mugda)

— Star photo by Enamul Huq



The only means of communication (Kamrangirchar)

— Star photo by A KM Mohsin

Help Us, Beg 'Tortured' Suspects Held without Trial

HUMAN-rights monitors and diplomats are pressing for the immediate trial or release of more than 40 English-speaking Cameroonians being detained and reportedly tortured in Yaounde.

About 50 people were arrested after a spate of attacks on police and gendarmerie premises in Bamenda, the capital of North-West Province, in late March 1997.

The suspects have been held ever since, incommunicado and without trial, in maximum-security jails. Some reports say eight of them have died as a result of torture and adverse prison conditions.

An SOS smuggled out recently said: "We're being tortured physically and mentally to death by a black hand. Please

help save sinking souls whose only crime has been a difference in political opinion."

At the time of the arrests, authorities blamed the terrorist attacks, which left 10 people dead, on secessionists fighting for independence for the Southern Cameroons — the anglophone and formerly British-ruled part of Cameroon which includes North-West Province.

Troop movements and deployment of security agents have been stepped up in the region, and official sources have suggested that certain opposition politicians were behind the attacks. Within Southern Cameroons, however, there have been accusations that government agents staged the raids as a pretext to crack down on demands for increased local rights.

Well over a year after 10 people died in attacks on security posts in an anglophone area of Cameroon, a group of suspects are still being held without charge. International pressure for fair treatment and justice is now building, reports *Gemini News Service*, following reports that some have died in jail. Nde Patrice Ateh writes from Yaounde.

Meanwhile, the United States ambassador to Yaounde, Charles Twining, has joined the growing chorus of voices demanding fair treatment and justice for the Bamenda detainees.

Twining condemned the "sorry state" in which the suspects were held, and said he had been pressing the government for action, adding: "You certainly can't detain people indefinitely in any country without charge."

Dr Solomon Nfor Gwiri, chairman of Cameroon's Na-

tional Commission of Human Rights, Freedoms and Liberties, said the detainees were crowded in cells without proper facilities. "We're battling with the authorities to say that they shouldn't be detained for so long without judgment and to improve their human rights situation in jail," he added.

Reports of torture of the suspects were supported by a magistrate, who asked not to be named. He said he had been told of deaths from burns and bleeding, and pointed out that evidence existed of security agents

possessing "instruments of torture in their offices, such as hammers, pincers, axes, cutlasses and various whips... We've also learnt how they switch on an electric iron to place on the body of suspects."

Southern Cameroons elder statesman John Ngu Foncha, who led the region into unification with the French-speaking Republique du Cameroon in 1961, has petitioned the United Nations and the diplomatic corps over the issue of the detainees and heightened military activity.

Foncha, a former national vice-president, urged the international community to intervene "and avert any further killings of Southern Cameroonians."

He accused the government of President Paul Biya of using force to solve a political question, saying: "The refusal... to set up a public commission of inquiry to investigate the [March 1997] incident suggests that the so-called terrorist attacks were a pretext by the regime to silence the English-speaking community on the

Southern Cameroons question."

Foncha, an advisory member of the Southern Cameroons National Council, which has been pressing for greater regional rights, denied that there was any plan to wage an armed conflict or declare anglophone independence.

He has been accused by government supporters of supplying guns for secessionists.

In another development in North-West Province, a group of 40 businessmen, professionals and leading figures who suffered serious damage to property in post-election violence six years ago, are threatening to stage demonstrations in Bamenda and Yaounde to demand government compensation for their losses. An earlier award

for damages was largely swallowed by one senior leader, they claim. President Biya, who won a second seven-year term last year, and whose Cameroon People's Democratic Movement won an overall parliamentary majority in a poll marred by allegations of widespread electoral fraud, has a reputation for refusing to act under pressure or threats.

"This is why he does not want to listen to the pleas of the terrorist suspects," said a close aide, adding: "He's often very impatient and irritated at street demonstrations, and will not hesitate sending troops to stop and disband public disturbances."

The writer is a freelance Cameroonian journalist.

BREAST FEEDING

Continued from page 20

annually in Bangladesh. At Taka 20 per liter (average rural price), annual value of breastmilk in Bangladesh is Taka 1400 crore for actual current production and 2200 crore for the total potential capacity. At Taka 40 per liter (price of milk from powder), these values are Taka 2800 crores and 4400 crores respectively. In addition, breastfeeding saves an estimated Taka 24 crore every year by preventing diarrhoeal diseases in children. An additional Taka 110 crore will have to be spent annually to compensate for the contraceptive value of exclusive breastfeeding. This is about 3.1% of the total GDP (1996-97) and 21% of the annual production in the sector

of Agriculture (Crops, Forestry, Livestock and Fisheries). The amount of money (Tk. 3200 crore) spent on powder milk import annually could fund 12 (Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project) BINP projects for 6 years, i.e. 480 thanas for six years.

Cost of artificial feeding: Artificial feeding is too costly for individuals, societies and nations. There is cost of increased spending on health care as the artificially fed infant suffers more than breastfed infants from problems like diarrhoea, ARI, meningitis, ear infections, allergies, cancers, diabetes, learning difficulties and malnutrition. Percentage of minimum wage spent on breast milk substitutes for a three month old baby in various countries has been calculated

as follows: Germany 6%, New Zealand 5%, Malaysia 24%, Poland 26%, Philippines 26%, Slovakia 43% and Indonesia 50%. From these figures it appears that the poorer nation's families are to pay very heavily on artificial feeding. It is horrifying when we see the results of the analyses of the situation in Bangladesh: 3 month old child if fed with BMS will require 9 tins in a month containing 450g of powder milk in each tin which costs about 1700 Taka. The minimum wage including allowances of a person in Government sector in this country is 2400 Taka.

Therefore this family with minimum wage will have to spend about 74% of his salary on purchasing BMS. Besides this there are other associated spending with this such as water, fuel and mothers time.

About 99% of the families in Bangladesh will not be able to afford to feed their infants with BMS.

Our responsibilities in the situation

"All of us in the society should be aware on the economic benefits besides other benefits of breast feeding. At the same time we will learn and disseminate hazards and high cost of bottle feeding. The political leaders and policy makers will be advocated and helped to make provision for programmes for the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding. After all the country cannot afford to lose one of the best national resources, that is, breast milk. Next generation will be a better generation and the nation will be more prosperous if all infants are breastfed properly.

Bangladesh Diesel Plant Ltd (BSEC)
Joydebpur, Gazipur

Re-Tender Notice of Sale

জাতীয় অগ্রগতিতে বিএসইসি'র আন্তর্জাতিক মানের পণ্য সামগ্রী ব্যবহার করুন

Sealed tenders are invited from bonafide firm for sale of scrap/different types of goods by the Bangladesh Diesel Plant Ltd (BSEC), Joydebpur, Gazipur.

Serial No	Tender No	Description of goods	Cost of tender document	Place of opening tender	Date and time of opening tender
1	BDP/Com/Sales-26	Scrap/different kinds of rejected goods (which have been mentioned in schedule).	50/- (fifty taka) only (Non-refundable)	1. Marketing Division, Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation, 102, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. 2. Commercial Division, Bangladesh Diesel Plant Ltd, Joydebpur, Gazipur.	Tender box will be closed on 17-8-98 at 2:30 PM and will be opened the same day at 2:40 PM.

Tender schedule and other terms and conditions can be procured from the office mentioned below on cash payment as mentioned above everyday during office hours:

- In-charge, Cash Section, Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation, BSEC Bhaban, 102, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215.
- Deputy Chief Accounts Officer, Bangladesh Diesel Plant Ltd, Joydebpur, Gazipur.

No tender will be sold on the day of opening tender.

No-BSEC/PRD/016
Date 21/7/98
DFP-15957/23-7-98

G-1721