

Calico: Once a profitable concern now a closed mill

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, Oct 4 : Calico Cotton Mills, the only cotton mill here remained closed for the last six years. A total of 700 workers and employees of the mill were passing their days amidst untold miseries as their due salaries remained unpaid by the owner of the mill.

The mill was established in 1967 under private ownership. But following liberation of the country, it was nationalised in 1972 and its management was vested upon BTMC.

However, after long 13 years, the mill was denationalised and the management was returned to its owner. But at the same time it was also owned by the government as the share was divided between the government and the original owner. The share was 49 per cent and 51 per cent.

The mill was constructed on 1.92 acres of land to the East of Pabna town just beside the North Bengal highway. It was a highly profitable concern and the demand of its yarn, due to its high quality, was very high. The consumers of its products were all the textile mills of the country. The hosiery and handloom factories also purchased a good portion of its products. The mill could meet the growing demands of its yarn made by different interested quarters of the country. The government had also been earning a lot in the form of Customs duty and other taxes.

The mill was declared closed several years back for several reasons. Firstly, they were running with acute shortage of running capital. Secondly, it was also facing a terribly bad relation between the management and the labourers; Thirdly, they lacked the capacity to repay the loans taken from the Agrani Bank which became Taka 16 crore 93 lakh 54 thousand and 941. For realising this defaulting amount, the Agrani Bank started a case against the Calico Cotton Mills authorities in Artha Rin Adalat, Pabna, where it was pending for years. Under such circumstances, the bank expressed its complete unwillingness to grant any fresh loan in favour of the mills

unless they paid their outstanding dues.

Meanwhile, the mill area wore a completely deserted look. For guarding the mills' property, there were only 15 Ansars who had been doing their duties on shift basis, but the management deputed none either to look after the property or to supervise the Ansar guards. The owners seemed to be not sincere enough to look after the property.

When asked by this correspondent, a labour leader told that the management had virtually lost interest in re-opening the mills. The management also failed to protect the property, they alleged. The high amount of bank-loan which became higher, probably, than the total valuation of the assets might have attributed to the loss in interest of the mills management.

The management would only re-open the mills if they were granted fresh loan of several crores of taka needed as the running capital and also for payment of staff salaries and re-modelling the machineries, they told this correspondent.

Meanwhile, its buildings became dilapidated. But such loan was not available due to unwillingness of the Ministry of Finance.

The government, having a share of 49 per cent, was also not sincere in re-opening the mill. They held several meetings with the owners. But the initiatives did not come out fruitful. But still, it was the government which could alone re-vitalise this profitable concern.

Meanwhile, many of the labourers, at least 10 in number, died of starvation, many were compelled to take up alternative profession while many others were still lying unemployed and passing very hard days.

The mill area had already turned into grazing ground of cattle during day-time. It became a safer place for criminals during night. Buildings, surrounding walls were getting dilapidated. Those might collapse at any moment. The mills' property were being stolen for want of proper care.

News snaps

Jail term for 4 Indian nationals

PANCHGARH, Oct 4 : Four Indian nationals have been sentenced to two months simple imprisonment by a court here on Wednesday for illegal border crossing, reports UNB.

The convicts were identified as Paolu, 30, Nuz, 40, Makbul Hossain, 45, and Makbul Ali, 48 of Muri Khawa village in Phashidhan thana of Darjeeling district. According to the prosecution, Bangladeshi border guards arrested them when they intruded into Bangladeshi territory through Krishnakanta Jot border in Tetulia thana on September 13. After examining records and witnesses, first class magistrate Jotirmoy Barman pronounced the judgement.

Flood damages Aman crops

THAKURGAON, Oct 4 : Flash flood caused by incessant rainfall for the last several days inundated thousands of hectares of Aman paddy fields in the low lying areas, reports BSS.

According to the Agriculture Extension Department, around 7,000 hectares of Aman paddy, 200 hectares of winter vegetables and 40 hectares of Mashkalai have been inundated in Haripur, Ranisankail, Pirganj, Balaidangi and sadar upazilas. The badly affected upazilas are Haripur and Ranisankail. Water Development Board sources said, the River Tangon was flowing on Tuesday less than one metre below the danger level. The River Nagar at Haripur and the Kulkai at Ranisankail were flowing almost near the danger levels. Several roads and highways have been inundated. The flash flood has submerged many places of the Thakurgaon-Panchagarh highway.

Ershad Shikdar's accomplice held

JHALAKATHI, Oct 4 : Police arrested another associate of Khulna's top terror Ershad Shikdar from Palbari in Sadar thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

The arrested, identified as Khalilur Rahman, 45, confessed to the police that he had a link with Ershad Shikdar. Khalilur, hailing from Gagan village in Kalkati thana, used to live at Jinnapara in Khulna. After the arrest of Ershad Shikdar, he left Khulna and took shelter at Palbari village. Police caught him for his suspicious movement in the area.

Fresh rivalry between RU BCL factions

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Oct 4 : Two factions of ruling Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) brought out separate processions on the campus on Thursday, triggering fresh rivalry.

The processions led by Sakhawat Hossain Shafiq and Ehsanul Haq Pintu, president and secretary respectively of RU BCL, paraded the campus. The last council of the organisation was held on November 27, 1997. But the central committee could not appoint even president and secretary because of sharp differences between Shafiq and Pintu groups.

After about two and a half years on March 23, 1999 the central committee of the organisation made Shakhawat Hossain Shafiq and Ehsanul Haq Pintu president and secre-

tary respectively of the RU unit. But its full-fledged committee was not declared.

Now the president and secretary are trying to induct their 'blue-eyed boys' on the committee.

Before the president and secretary were made the two rival groups locked in clashes several times, injuring a large number of activists. Four leaders from both the groups were stabbed only in the last month.

Two months ago, mid-ranking activists of the organisation demanded a full-fledged committee be elected. They also threatened to resign en masse.

Following this, rival leaders compelled to start negotiation to end two and a half years old rivalry. And a full-fledged committee was formed.

Rajshahi city Awami League and Chhatra League leaders brokered the 'deal'.

Incidents of piracy in rivers rising alarmingly

MANIKGANJ, Oct 4 : The incidents of piracy in the Padma and Jamuna rivers are rising at an alarming rate as the law enforcement agencies do not take action against the pirates, reports UNB.

Frequent reports of robberies are reported from the areas in the downstream, particularly Munshiganj, Daulatdia, Aricha, Nagarbari and Kazirhat areas.

Local alleged that the law enforcement agencies were not playing their due role in tracking down the pirates. They occasionally conduct raids, but in vain," Akmal Hossain, a small trader.

Leaders of Aricha Ghat Launch Owners' Association in Manikganj said passengers of the routes are gradually becoming dependent on mechanised boats for even long-route journeys taking the risk of their lives.

They alleged that these unauthorised mechanised boats were carrying passengers defying government rules. But the law enforcers are turning a blind eye to them.

When asked police said they could not keep constant vigil on the lawbreakers for lack of logistic support and necessary manpower.

Armed pirates swooped on a boat in the River Jamuna near Nolgandha village in Sharisabari thana of Jamalpur district and looted valuables from traders on Saturday.

Police said a band of about 15 pirates attacked the boat, carrying 30-32 traders and looted about Tk 50.00 from them in broad daylight.

The traders were going to a Bazaar in Kazirhat thana of Sirajganj from Pingna ghat for buying cows.

2.38 lakh acres of arable land fallow

SYLHET, Oct 4 : While the country's acreage farmland is shrinking rapidly, some 2.38 lakh acres of arable land in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj and Moulvibazar districts are left fallow, reports UNB.

By some estimates the country may have additional crops worth over Tk 150 crore every year by bringing the fallow land under cultivation.

They said the government could take a massive afforestation programme on the lands to help protect the environment. The government can also earn over Tk 5 crore in revenue by leasing out the fallow lands.

They said that if the authorities concerned could take necessary steps in this regard a large number of landless people would be able to search a new life in farming.

Experts said some 3 lakh metric tons of grains could be produced every year from the lands cultivating various crops, including paddy, wheat, maize and jute.

According to local sources, a contingent of police raided a den of terrorists and extortionists at Baitulaman in the town on September 22 and arrested a notorious terrorist identified as Touhid, 25, associate of top terror Shahid who was wanted in 12 criminal cases.

Following the arrest of Touhid his accomplices attacked the police by blasting nearly two dozens of bombs and crackers in a bid to snatch away Touhid from the police who foiled their attack by firing 19 rounds of blank shots. Now Touhid is in police custody.

National

Faridpur DIARY

Teachers assoc's sit-in

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Oct 4 : Shikshak Samity Federation, Faridpur district unit staged a sit-in at DC's office campus and handed over a memorandum containing several demands to him.

Presided over by Principal Md Nasiruddin Ahmed Musa, convenor of the district unit, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Prof Abdul Kashem, Prof Abdur Rob, Prof Shahidul Alam, Prof Shahed Ali, Prof Mizanur Rahman and Prof Abdul Kalam Azad.

Training for primary teachers

A day long training course for primary school teachers was held here at the Asha school recently.

To create awareness about mental retardation among the children, the training course was organised by Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled (SWID) and was participated by the headmasters of 20 government primary schools under the sadar thana.

The inaugural function of the course was chaired by S M Nurunnabi, vice-president of the Faridpur unit of SWID, Bangladesh while it was addressed, among others, by Dr Lutfar Rahman, president of SWID, Mia Lutuar Rahman, Vice President, M A Baten, General Secretary, Col (retd) Golam Mohiuddin, Treasurer, Prof G W H Chowdhury, organising secretary of SWID and Prof Md Shahjahan, Treasurer of the local unit.

Memo submitted to DC

The district unit of Bangladesh College Teachers Association (BCTA) held a meeting here in the Faridpur Press Club premises recently.

Presided over by Nasiruddin Ahmed Musa, district convenor of BCTA and Principal of local City College, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Vice-Principal Abdur Rob Mia, office secretary of BCTA, Md Nazrul Islam, assistant secretary of BCTA, Prof Shahed Ali, Vice-Principal, Abul Kalam Azad, Prof Majibur Rahman, Prof Yunis Ali, Prof Mizanur Rahman, Prof Nazrul Islam and Principal Abdul Kalam Azad.

The speakers urged the government to meet their 15-point and seven-point demands, otherwise the BCTA will go for a 'greater movement' to realise their demands, they gave the ultimatum.

Later on they submitted a memorandum stating their demands to the Deputy Commissioner (DC).

Terrorist arrested

A contingent of police raided a den of terrorists and extortionists at Baitulaman in the town on September 22 and arrested a notorious terrorist identified as Touhid, 25, associate of top terror Shahid who was wanted in 12 criminal cases.

Following the arrest of Touhid his accomplices attacked the police by blasting nearly two dozens of bombs and crackers in a bid to snatch away Touhid from the police who foiled their attack by firing 19 rounds of blank shots. Now Touhid is in police custody.

Dacoities on rise

Dacoities were committed in the two houses, one belonging to Sohrab Molla and another to Abul Kalam at village Teprupurkandi in the sadar thana recently.

According to local sources, a gang of dacoits numbering eight to 10 came in a trolley, entered into the houses one after another forcefully, tied the inmates, looted the houses at gun point and decamped with the valuables including gold and other household articles worth over Tk 50,000.

Thefts and dacoities have alarmingly increased here during the rainy season. The dacoits come in trolleys and commit dacoities at the houses on the river Padma, the villagers said.

Police said the accident occurred when a Mymensingh bound passenger bus from Haluaghat, colliding head-on with a truck coming from the opposite direction killing on the spot and injuring 26 others at about 9 pm.

Of the injured one died on way to MMCH.

The dead were identified as Billal Hossain, 15, Abdul Hye, 40.

Ganesh Chandra Sen, 35, Nazrul Islam, 30, Tajuddin, 35, Mabub, 20, Kader, 25, Manan, 25, Shafiqul, 20, Rashida and Afzal were admitted to MMCH in a critical condition.

A young pine-apple trader was killed a few others were injured in a road accident at Old Bust Stand area in Nandail thana on August 20.

Police said the accident occurred when a Mymensingh bound passenger bus from Haluaghat Health complex where the doctors declared him dead. The cause behind his suicide could not be known.

Liton Mia, 22, committed suicide by taking poison following a quarrel with his elder brother over a trifling matter on August 20.

He was the son of Abdul Karim of village Baulia Bajra in Haluaghat thana.

A cloth-trader identified as Abdul Hannan, 30, of village Purua in Haluaghat thana took poison for unknown reason on August 18.

He died at Haluaghat Thana Health Complex soon after his admission.

Another young man Ayub Ali, 30, of village Gogjum in Haluaghat thana committed suicide by taking poison on August 28.

The body was sent to MMCH morgue for autopsy.

One person identified as Dulal, 40, was electrocuted and another Omar Ali, 45, was injured when they came in touch with a live electric wire at a fisheries project at village Char Horipur in the Sadar thana on August 29.

According to police, the accident took place as a pine-apple laden truck from Madhupur in Tangail to Kendua in Netrakona district was waylaid by a group of miscreants at Nandail Old Bust Stand area at dead of night, the miscreants demanded toll from the driver and trader. As they refused to pay the toll, the miscreants allegedly started beating them mercilessly. The driver drove the vehicle at high speed to escape the attack. As the driver lost control over steering, the truck fell into a road side pond killing the trader on the spot.

The victim was identified as Jasim Uddin, 25.

On being informed police recovered the unidentified body from the River Bajra. She was wearing a blouse and a petticoat. The body bore marks of injury in the throat.

Bhaluka police also recovered an unidentified body of a young man, 30, from the drain of a deep tubewell at Goari village.

The government has sanctioned 325.02 metric tons of relief goods for the erosion affected people.

Informed by the local people, police rushed to the spot and re-



25 unnatural deaths in Mymensingh in August

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, Oct 4 : At least 25 unnatural deaths were reported here in the month of August.

At least 12 persons were killed and over 50 persons were injured in separate road accidents last month. According to police, two persons were killed and three others were injured near Nandail Bus Stand in Nandail thana on August 4 when a truck collided with a truck on August 4.

The dead were identified as Selim, 35, and Mamata, 10.

A girl was identified as Rozina, 6, who was crushed under the wheels of a bus at Bharabuka in Bhaluka on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway on August 26.

Police said, the girl was crushed when she was crossing the road.

After the incident, the driver tried to flee the scene, but the people caught him red-handed after chasing and handed over him to police.

He was identified as Emdad Ali, 40.

A mother was killed and her two children were injured in a road accident at Bhaluka Pilot School area on August 25.

The accident occurred when a Dhaka bound bus from Mymensingh crushed them in the evening, killing Mantaj Begum, 28, on the spot and injured two of her children Alpana Begum, 5, and Nayan Mica, 2.