

## National



**Unabated destruction:** (left) The River Meghna's erosion at Jamunaghat of Natun Bazaar in Chandpur (middle) Vast tracts of lands and hundreds of homes have gone under water in four unions of Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia district due to unabated erosion of the Padma (right): Hundreds of families have become homeless in Tangail district because of erosion by the Jamuna. — Star photo

## Erosion takes a serious turn in 5 dists

By Staff Correspondent

Erosion has taken a serious turn in five districts:

**Our Rangpur Correspondent says:** Erosion at Gangachhara Upazila in Rangpur district along the right bank of the River Teesta takes an alarming turn. At least 350 army jawans headed by Lt Col Morshed Mahboob Iqbal have been working along with Water Development Board men to protect Teesta dam.

Gangachhara Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ashish Kumar Sarker told this correspondent that erosion situation is now out of danger following army's round the clock work since Saturday last.

He said about 400 metre area of the town protection dam has been devoured by the river.

Hundreds of sand bags, bamboo made Parkopines, over 350 large number of cement concrete blocks have been thrown along the damaged site.

Now the spar works are going on in full swing to check erosion.

At present water level in the river is gradually receding and he hoped the situation will improve shortly.

Acting GOC of Rangpur Cantonment on Thursday visited the erosion hit areas at Kolkond union and witnessed the progress of the protection work. He asked the army personnel to continued the protection work.

There had been apprehension that the River Teesta would

change its course and start flowing through Manosh, a river which passed touching Rangpur town and thus the existence of the town would be threatened and ultimately the dam would wash away.

**Our Netrokona correspondent reports:** About 300 families have been rendered homeless and 700 acres of land washed away by the erosion of the River Magra, Kongsha and Sumashowary in Durgapur, Khallai and Atpara upazilas during the last week.

A vast tract of land of Shunajur, Najergonj Bazaar, Gonjer Bazaar, Madua Khali, Dawsree and Norobatkilla under Atpara upazila went in to the gorge of the river Magra.

Local people dumped sands, bamboo and timbers to protect the area from the erosion. But all of their attempts went in vain due to strong current of the river.

Local people urged the authorities concerned to look into the matter and take necessary action immediately.

**Our Kushtia correspondent reports:** With the rise in water levels of the Padma and the Gorai, erosion has taken a serious turn here.

The affected upazilas are Daulatpur, Bheramara and Kumarkhali. Vast tracts of arable land, a large number of dwelling houses, offices, educational institutions, business establishments, roads, bridges

and culverts have been washed away by erosion.

In Daulatpur upazila four unions have been badly affected by erosion. About 5,000 acres of standing Aus crops have already been damaged. About 500 houses have been washed away by the rivers. The badly affected villages in Chilmari union are Chakrapur, Purba Bazumara, Pashchim Udanagar, Uttar Udanagar, Charvabanadadler, Sarkarpara, Pashchim Amdani Ghat, Purba Amdani Ghat, Purba Ramkrishnapur, Pashchim Ramkrishnapur, Dakkhin Kharizathak, Uttar Kharizathak, Dakkhin Sarkarpara, Uttar Sarkarpara and Temadia.

The villages badly affected in Ramkrishnapur union are: Sonatala, Sarkarpara, Charbhadr, Charukuri, Bagmari, Madhugari, Islampur, Kharibona, Dhakipara, Bhagiot, Kharizathak Purba, Loknathpur and Charpara. The villages badly affected under Philipnagar union are Jotashi, Natunchar, Almagar nd Abederghat.

The villages badly affected under Maricha union are: Laxminagar, Purardiar, Chilmari, Bhurkapara, Hatholapara, Koldiar and Machdiar.

No higher official visited the erosion affected areas and no relief materials in kind or cash reached for distribution among the victims.

The River Padma has devoured 30 educational institu-

tions and five Border Outposts during the period.

Meanwhile, the River Gorai is likely to engulf fresh areas and many handloom industries may be threatened.

Earlier, people of Kumarkhali staged demonstrations in support of their demand for protection of Kumarkhali town immediately.

**UNB from Sylhet reports:** Unabated erosion of the rivers Surma and Kushiara in the frontier Zakiganj upazila of Sylhet district has been causing panic among the local people.

In last few years a vast tract of land went into gorge of the two rivers and created new lands in the Indian side. The hilly rivers change their course regularly.

The rivers engulf the Bangladesh lands almost everyday and new shoals are emerging at the other side of the rivers, local people said.

Indian authorities hoisted their national flags in these Bangladesh lands and set up BSF camps there. The local Indians are using the lands for cultivation of various crops and construction of dwelling houses.

To save the country's territory from the erosion of the river Surma and Kushiara Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has prepared two ambitious projects — Bhuiyana Project and Zakiganj Project — at a cost of over Tk 79 crore which are awaiting gov-

ernment approval.

The board prepared the project proposals on priority basis to protect a vast tract of Bangladesh territory in Zakiganj and sent these to Water Resources Ministry for approval.

The proposals of the two projects were made in consultation with the high officials of the Ministry, as it is the question of protecting territory of the country.

The projects will cost Tk 41.38 crore and Tk 37.65 crore respectively. After the proper approval the projects are likely to be completed by 2005, official sources here said.

Upon the completion of the projects the courses of the rivers will be changed and Bangladesh territory and valuable assets will be saved.

A project official said these are very priority projects of the government as the rivers are not only engulfing the mosques, temple, dwellings and crop lands but it is changing the geographical map of country.

Local leaders urged the government to expedite approval of the projects in the interest of the nation.

**A Tangail Correspondent says:** River erosion has taken a serious turn in Tangail.

Garla and Nauhati unions in Vunchapur upazila have been seriously effected by the erosion.

Many institutions including

a vast track of land have been threatened. The erosion has rendered nearly 3,500 families shelterless. Affected families have lost all their belongings including their dwelling houses and immovable property.

Such erosion victims have turned into destitutes.

They have been fighting a losing battle for survival on abandoned embankments and roadside spaces under makeshift shelters. They have no job to earn their living now. Many victims have been striving hard for survival as day labour and rickshawpullers, but most of them have to remain jobless. This is because the job market is very limited in this small district town.

Local Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) submitted a 10 crore taka project proposal to the higher authorities to build spars to save handloom factory in Garla union newly build health complex, many schools and colleges. If the authority do not pay need to the (BWDB) proposal all the educational and commercial establishments might be devoured by the rivers.

At present the western bank of the River Jamuna is only seven-kilometre off Tangail town. If the erosion is continued at the present pace, the town will go under the river.

Meanwhile, all the measures taken so far to stop erosion have proved to be ineffective.

## News snaps

### Attack on Jamaat leader

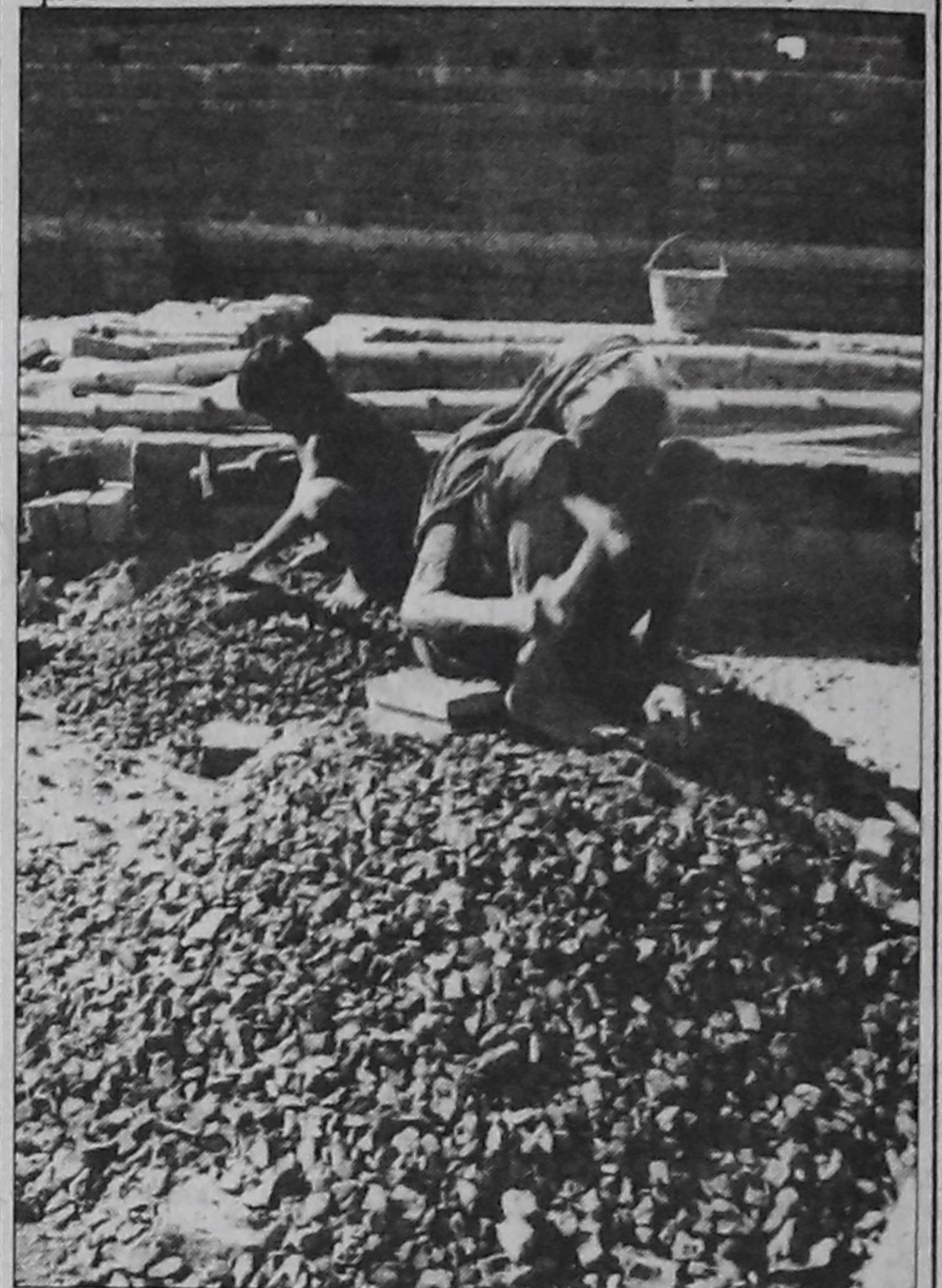
PABNA, July 14: Some 100 angry Chhatra League activists stormed the home of a Jamaat leader at Gopalpur Paharata in the town on Thursday night and reportedly unleashed vandalism, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the unruly activists came in a procession and attacked the house of former Jamaat-e-Islami MP Moulana Abdus Sobhan at about 9pm while demonstrating against the killing of their colleagues in Chittagong. Moulana blamed Chhatra League for the attack. They also pelted the upper stairs of the building with bricks during the onset. During the attack the district Jamaat Amir was on the top floor. District Jamaat leaders condemned the incident and demanded punishment of the BCL men.

### Procurement drive progressing

BOGRA, July 14: Some 6,644 mts of wheat were procured from 11 upazilas here against the target of 5,706 mts this season, reports UNB.

The wheat procured from April 11 to June 30 has been stored in 21 government godowns. Agriculture officials attributed the huge procurement of the foodgrains to its bumper production. Paddy procurement drive is going in full swing although it was launched behind the schedule. According to local food office, some 14,500 mts of paddy and 28,827 mts of rice will be procured this season at Tk 307 and Tk 482 respectively.



**Making a living:** Aklima Bewa, an 85-year-old woman of Patgram in Rangpur district has not waited for someone to provide her with food in the bag end of her life. Instead she made a living by breaking bricks in this populous district, while her little grand child lends a helping hand. She deserves salute for her indomitable spirit. — Star photo by Mozammel Haq

### New Polytechnic Institute

NAOGAON, July 14: To help spread science and technical education across the country the government has undertaken a project to set up a polytechnic institute here, reports UNB.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil laid the foundation stone of the building of the new vocational institute on July 6. The institute will be set up on 2.06 acres of land in Arji Moholla in the town. Initially four academic buildings will be constructed at a cost of over Tk 6.20 crore, official sources said.

### Man succumbs to injuries

PATUAKHALI, July 14: A man injured in an attack by his rivals over land dispute succumbed to his injuries at the local General Hospital on Monday noon, reports UNB.

Police said Bellal Hossain Mollah, 25, of village south Pangashia in Dumki upazila was hit with sharp weapons at noon on July 1. Later he was rushed to the hospital in a critical condition. A case was filed and police on Monday arrested a local youth, Nasir Khan, in connection with the murder.

### Election postponed

BAGERHAT, July 14: The student union election of Chitalmari Sher-e-Bangla Degree College has been postponed on Wednesday after some hoodlums snatched the nomination papers submitted for the election, reports UNB.

College sources said the hoodlums stormed into the election room of the college and took away 14 nomination papers submitted by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and independent candidates for the July 24 election.

### Population Day observed

GAZIPUR, July 14: District Population and Family Planning organised a rally in connection with the observance of World Population Day, reports BSS.

The function held at the District Administration Auditorium was presided over by Samsul Haque, Deputy Commissioner of Gazipur. Ahasan Ullah Master MP was the chief guest at the function. AKM Mozammel Haque Chairman, Gazipur Municipality, was among those, who spoke at the function. The theme of the rally was 'savings women's life'. The chief guest distributed prize among the best family planning worker.

### Viral fever in Madaripur

MADARIPUR, July 14: Viral fever has broken out in an epidemic form affecting both children and adults in Madaripur town, reports BSS.

The fever starts with loss of appetite, headache, sneezing and sore throat. After one or two days body temperature reaches 105 degree Fahrenheit.

According to physicians, the fever is accompanied with body aches, dry cough and infection in the respiratory tract. The fever continues for five to seven days.

### School boy killed in road mishap

MEHERPUR, July 14: A school student was run over by a passenger bus at College Moor on Meherpur-Kushtia road on Monday, reports BSS.

Police said, the victim, Arshad, 14, was run over by the bus while he was crossing the road. Arshad was the son of Khoka Sheikh, village Monakhi in Meherpur Sadar Upazila. The bus was seized by the police.

### Ban denied

RANGAMATI, July 14: Despite a ban on cutting bamboo during June-August period, some bamboo traders in collaboration with a section of forest officials are indiscriminately logging bamboo in local forests, reports UNB. Witnesses said bamboo logging goes on unabated in Baghatchari, Barkal, Naniachar, Jurachhari and Bilachhari upazilas. They said bamboo is supplied to various parts of the country through Kachalang River, Kutukchhari, Khilachhari, Bogachhari, Jettighat, Silchhari, Kauhali, Kalampati, Ghagra, Manikchhari and Subalong points.

### Statue stolen

COMILLA, July 14: A touchstone-made statue of Hindu goddess 'Kali' was stolen from an ancient temple at Goyal Mathon in Sadar upazila on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

Locals said the statue weighing about 45 kgs and worth about Tk 1 crore was installed in the temple during the reign of Tripura Maharaja. A case was filed with local police station in this connection.

## Bogra spice research centre



A new spice research centre was established on 70 acres of land at Rainagor -Shibganj in Bogra district by Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute with the assistance of the government. Research work on indigenous and exotic spices of 20 varieties is going on here. The project was initiated in 1994 while land for it was acquired in 1998. Headed by project director Abdur Rashid, research work on onion, ginger, garlic, turmeric, chilli and other varieties of spices are done. Two varieties of turmeric, one variety of winter onion and other varieties of spices are being cultivated at Sariakandi and Shivganj and researched here. If the cultivators here can produce summer onion, the government can export four lakh tons of onion fetching valuable foreign currency. If the farmers adopt summer onion varieties, valuable foreign currencies will be saved.

— Star photo by Akhteruzzaman Bablu

## Ganges Barrage Project work delayed

### Farmers of 6 dists frustrated

KUSHTIA, July 14: The Ganges Barrage project proposed about 20 years ago at a cost of Tk 1,131 crore is yet to be implemented, reports UNB.

Farmers of Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Magura, Narail and Jessore districts hoped that implementation of the project would usher in prosperity for them. But their hopes were shattered due to its unusual delay.

Due to the adverse effect of Farakka Barrage requisite water at the Harding Bridge point here was not available during the dry season. As a result the GK project pump could not be operated during the Aus season from 1993 causing a loss of Aus crop production worth about Tk 100 crore every year.

The project was scheduled to be constructed at 4 km downstream of the Harding Bridge near Talbaria.

According to WDB sources works on the scheme started in fiscal 1980-81, which was taken up in the backdrop of unilateral withdrawal of water of the

Ganges by India through the Farakka Barrage constructed on the other side of the border.

The project was aimed at em-

### Two new municipalities

COMILLA, July 14: Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Zillur Rahman has declared elevation of Burichang and Brahmanpara upazilas into municipalities, reports BSS.

He made this declaration while addressing a public meeting as the chief guest at Burichang thana headquarters here on Wednesday.

Presided over by Burichang Thana Awami League President Shamsuddin Ahmed, the meeting was attended by Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and President of Comilla District Awami League Prof Khorshed Alam.

suring sufficient water for irrigation, flood control and development of irrigation network in Rajshahi, Chuadanga, Kushtia, Chapalnawabganj, Naogaon, Sirajganj, Narail, Magura, Jhenidah, Jessore, Natore, Satkhira, Jhalakati, Khulna, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Shariatpur, Rajbari, Madaripur and Bhola districts.

During the same year a project implementation cell was set up under the auspices of WDB and later in 1984 a separate office was established for its successful execution. But the progress of the project work is being delayed due to mysterious reasons.

Official sources said about Tk four crore was placed initially and with the amount only a portion of survey work was completed.

An amount of Tk six crore was required to complete the first phase of the work. But no fund was allocated in the annual development programme throwing its future into uncertainty.

## Medical certificates on sale in RMCH Emergency Deptt?

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 14: The Emergency Department of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) has recently become a centre for selling and buying of medical certificates.

No certificate is given without payment of a big amount of money.

All kinds of patients with injuries of homicidal, suicidal and accidental nature get admission into the hospital through the Emergency Department.

Most of these cases are crime-related. So certificates from the serving doctors are required for conducting cases.

Police do not usually register cases without medical certificates from the Emergency Department. If police can somehow be managed to register the case, they do not make chargesheet without the medical certificates. So the victims who want to propagate cases need medical certificates. They go to the Emergency Department to seek the certificates. But the doctors are seen reluctant and annoyed to hear the certificate seekers.

"They do not even care to hear our words, if money is not proposed," said Raisul Islam of Naogaon, who came to take a certificate for his relative this week. His relative was seriously injured by a gang of terrorists. He has been cured and now needs a medical certificate to start his case.

"How can I propose money to a doctor straight-away at the first meeting?" he said. But at

last he did it and managed the certificate at a cost of Taka 9,500.

A genuine certificate costs Taka 3000 to Taka 6000. Whereas a partly fabricated certificate costs Taka 10,000 to Taka 20,000.

There are a very few rare cases where doctors have not taken money for certificates.

"Yes, we take money for the certificates," acknowledged some doctors of the RMCH Emergency Department. "This apparently seems illegal, but in other sense, it is justified."

Unwilling to be identified, the doctors said that issuance of a medical certificate meant the concerned doctor had to rush to the court several times when summoned by the court. "This is embarrassing and expensive. We are to suffer physically, mentally, financially and professionally for that," they said. So they take money to compensate the losses.

"In case of fabricated certificates we are to suffer more and face risks," So their demands grow higher in these cases.

When asked why they give false and fabricated certificates, they said the parties provoked and some times compelled them to do it. "Why should we put ourselves at risks and sufferings for others without getting any interests?" they asked.

There are some rules and facilities for the doctors for attending the courts. "Those facilities are so negligible that we cannot consider these as facili-

ties," doctors said.

To make issuance of medical certificates fair and easier, competent sources suggested two measures. Firstly, all the findings of the injuries should be written instantly on the admission form during admission at the Emergency Department of the patient and in the discharge certificate. This discharge certificate should include all necessary information and findings to be considered as a genuine medical certificate.

And secondly, the facilities of the doctors for attending courts should be reasonable enough.

Meanwhile most doctors of the Emergency Department are seen reluctant to attending patients. They remain busy in dealing with the parties seeking medical certificates gossiping and enjoying television programmes in the rest room.

Two doctors are scheduled to perform duty in each shift in the Emergency Department but most of the time only one doctor is seen in the chair or rest room, it is alleged.

Posting in the Emergency Department is considered as a fortune. Willing doctors spend lakhs of money to get posting in this department. The same amount of money is also need to stop transfer from the Emergency Department.

There are also allegations that the Emergency Medical Officers (EMO) seldom touch the patients except in special cases. Brothers (male nurses) do everything.



**Poor public hygiene:** Many varieties of fish species are being destroyed because of dumping of chemical wastes of Karnaphuli Paper Mills in the River Karnaphuli. This practice is legally prohibited but it is widespread. The entire environment of the river is at stake. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin