

CURRENT FISCAL ENDS IN TWO MONTHS

40 pc CHT projects still untouched

MONIRUL ISLAM MONU, *Bandarban*

Work on about 40 per cent of development projects in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) undertaken by the CHT Affairs Ministry for implementation in the current financial year has not yet been started though only two months of the fiscal remain.

This came to light at the monthly meeting held at Bandarban Hill District Council office here on Sunday to review progress of the projects.

High officials of the CHT Affairs Ministry attended the meeting. This was the second such meeting of the ministry outside Dhaka to review progress in implementation of development projects and ensure coordination among implementation agencies.

The first such meeting was held in Rahgamati in February.

Meeting sources told this correspondent that the meeting expressed utter dissatisfaction at the poor state of project implemen-

tation. The officials wondered whether the projects could at all be implemented within the period. The current 2004-2005 financial year ends in June.

CHT Affairs Ministry Secretary Mohammad Sahjahan Majumder presided over the meeting.

While reviewing the projects, Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan expressed his dismay that work on about 40 per cent of the projects have not yet been started. He also told the meeting the government's expectations from various implementation agencies, departments and local bodies and gave them guidelines.

He specifically mentioned the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, Chittagong Hill Tracts Electrification Project and Rural Development Project and held their officials responsible for non-implementation of their projects.

Moni Swapan warned the authorities concerned and said action would be taken against officials if the

money sanctioned for the projects are returned due to "negligence of officials or conspiracy".

He ordered the authorities concerned to implement the projects at any cost within the current financial year, the sources added.

The meeting however discuss ways for quick implementation of projects and identified flaws in the way. The officials also marked some of the sectors and urged their officials to implement the projects in time.

Local heads of government departments and high officials of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, representatives of Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachari hill district councils attended the meeting which also discussed possible projects for the next financial year.

Diarrhoea kills 8, attacks 2,087 in Gopalganj

A CORRESPONDENT, *Gopalganj*

Diarrhoea in five upazilas of the district has claimed eight lives, five of them children and attacked 2,087 others last week, according to Gopalganj Civil Surgeon (CS) Mohammad Shajahan.

The victims are: Shamsul Haque Sikder, 79, of Banogram in Sadar upazila, Jewel Sheikh, 2, of Chandradighalia in Sadar upazila, Anwara, 8, of Suktail in Sadar upazila, Shifar Sikder, 17, of Chandradighalia in Sadar upazila, Neamat, 50, of Borfa in Sadar upazila, Sima, 8, of Haridaspur in Sadar upazila, Mita, 11, of Patharghata in Tungipara upazila and a six-month-old baby Rezaul in Tungipara upazila.

According to hospital sources, 663 persons were admitted to hospital for treatment. 963 were outdoor patients and 479 were treat in the filed.

A medical team consisting of 83 persons has been formed to look after the diarrhoea patients, according to the CS. The medical team is working round the clock in different upazilas.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Health has supplied 2,000 bags (500 cc each) of cholera saline on April 4. But it is too meagre to meet the growing demand.



PHOTO: STAR

Bhatgram School & College with its roof blown away is one of many structures damaged by Sunday night's nor'wester that battered villages in Sadullapur upazila in Gaibandha district.

60 kg tumor removed from women's abdomen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangpur*

Doctors at a private clinic in the town on Saturday removed a 60 kg tumor from the abdomen of a woman.

A team of doctors led by Abdus Sobhan, principal of Rangpur Medical College, removed the tumor from the abdomen of Khodeza Begum, 50, of Boldia under Bh rungamari upzila.

Five years ago, she suspected that there was something wrong in her abdomen. She ignored it as there was no pain. But she came to a doctor two days ago as she could not bear the burden anymore. On investigation, doctors diagnosed a tumor and suggested operation, Abdus Sobhan said.

Khapra Ward Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

The Khapra Ward Day was observed at Rajshahi Central Jail and in the city on Sunday through various programmes.

The day is being observed to commemorate the incident in which seven prisoners were shot dead at Khapra Ward in the jail on April 24, 1950 as they protested torture and inadequate food supply to prisoners.



PHOTO: STAR

An office room ransacked Sunday allegedly by students belonging to JCD.

Result debacle: CMC students on rampage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Some unruly students of Chittagong Medical College (CMC), allegedly belonging to Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, ransacked office rooms of its Principal and Vice-principal and some wards of CMC hospital Sunday evening.

The incident occurred immediately after announcement of results of MBBS (profession) final examination at the college at around 7.30PM.

Police and CMC sources said, some 30 students of the college who faced result debacle in three papers - Medicine, Gynae and Surgery-- went on the rampage and ransacked four wards in Orthopaedics, Surgery and Medicine departments at Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Before police rushed to the spot, they also ransacked the office rooms of the principal and the vice-principal. Police however controlled situation at around 8pm, the sources said.

Fund crisis cripples Birishiri Tribal Cultural Academy

JAHAGIR ALAM, *Netrakona*

Birishiri Tribal Cultural Academy at Durgapur in Netrakona, the lone cultural centre for indigenous people in greater Mymensingh, is in a poor state due to fund crisis.

It is a centre also for religious and educational activities of Garos, Banai, Koch and Hajong tribes. But there has not been any response from the government for its development despite repeated appeals, officials of the academy told this correspondent during a recent visit.

Birishiri is 30 km from Netrakona. There is a large indigenous population in Durgapur and Kalmakanda upazilas in Netrakona district; Dhubaura, Haluaghat and Fulbaria upazilas in Mymensingh; Modhupur and Ghatail upazilas in Tangail; Nalithabari, Jinaigathi and Shreebardi upazilas in Sherpur district.

The two storied academy building was set up in 1977 on a three acre land to promote cultural, educational and other activities of indigenous people.

Sreejon Sangma, Research Officer at the Academy, told this correspondent that the objects are piled up here and there for lack of space. He said a museum is needed to keep the old artifacts represent-

ing distinctive culture of different tribes.

There is also a library, but it has a very poor collection of books.

The academy's director Mosharaf Karim said fund crisis hits cultural activities of the academy. The government gives Tk 28,75,000 a year to the academy, of which 17,75,000 is spent for staff salary of employees and artistes. The remaining amount (Tk 11,00,000) is too poor for routine programmes and cultural activities in a year, he said.

All development work by the academy is stopped for long for fund crisis. Mosharaf said the government was urged on many occasions to grant funds for development work, but to no effect.

The academy runs a three-year course for training on traditional tribal dance, song, drama and other cultural activities. Twenty students are enrolled every session.

But staff shortage hampers the performance. Though there are three posts of Deputy Director, none has been appointed to those. Only one post of Assistant Director has been filled up.

The posts of a Curator and an Engineer are vacant for long, said Assistant Director Uttam Richil.



PHOTO: STAR

The ailing Birishiri Tribal Cultural Academy in Netrakona where cultural programmes are held only occasionally due to lack of funds.