

# WFP wants to expand school feeding in remote areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Bogra

Visiting Deputy Executive Director of World Food Programme (WFP) Staffan de Mistura yesterday said they would like to expand their programme including school feeding in backward areas and scheme for providing food security for the ultra poor in Bangladesh.

During his visit to WFP assisted programmes along the Jamuna River on the second day of his three-day visit to Bangladesh, the WFP official, however, told The Daily Star that their assis-

tance depends on the government's desire as well as donors' response to it.

Staffan saw for himself the school feeding programme at Saghata Government Primary School and in river erosion-hit Hasilkandi area and community nutrition programme for pregnant women and children in adjoining areas during his Saghata visit.

He expressed optimism that the donors would come forward to help Bangladesh, where food assistance has evidently contributed to increasing primary school enrolment and reducing

dropouts, improved nutritional status for malnourished mother and children and brought thousands of river erosion victims under food safety net in Bangladesh.

"Due to the WFP support, the enrolment in the school rose to 100 percent in four years since the school feeding programme started in 2006. The dropout has reduced to nearly zero from 33 percent, while daily attendance rose to 87 percent from 62 percent during the period," said Mozammel Haque, headmaster of the school.

Inquiring into the WFP assisted programmes at the

field directly, Staffan said he was satisfied with the quality of programmes in Bangladesh, a country that urgently needs additional and continued supports from donors in the fields of education promotion, improvement of nutritional status of children and mother as well as food security for the ultra poor.

WFP Country Director John Ayliffe, Deputy Country Director Michael Dunford, Chief of the Staff of the Executive Director Ms Lauren Landis and Head of WFP Rangpur office Anwarul Kabir accompanied the delegate in Gaibandha and Jamalpur districts.

Asked what benefit WFP biscuits have brought to her family, housewife Asma Begum, 40, said, "Now I don't have to push my kids to go to school. Eager to get biscuits, they attend school regularly."

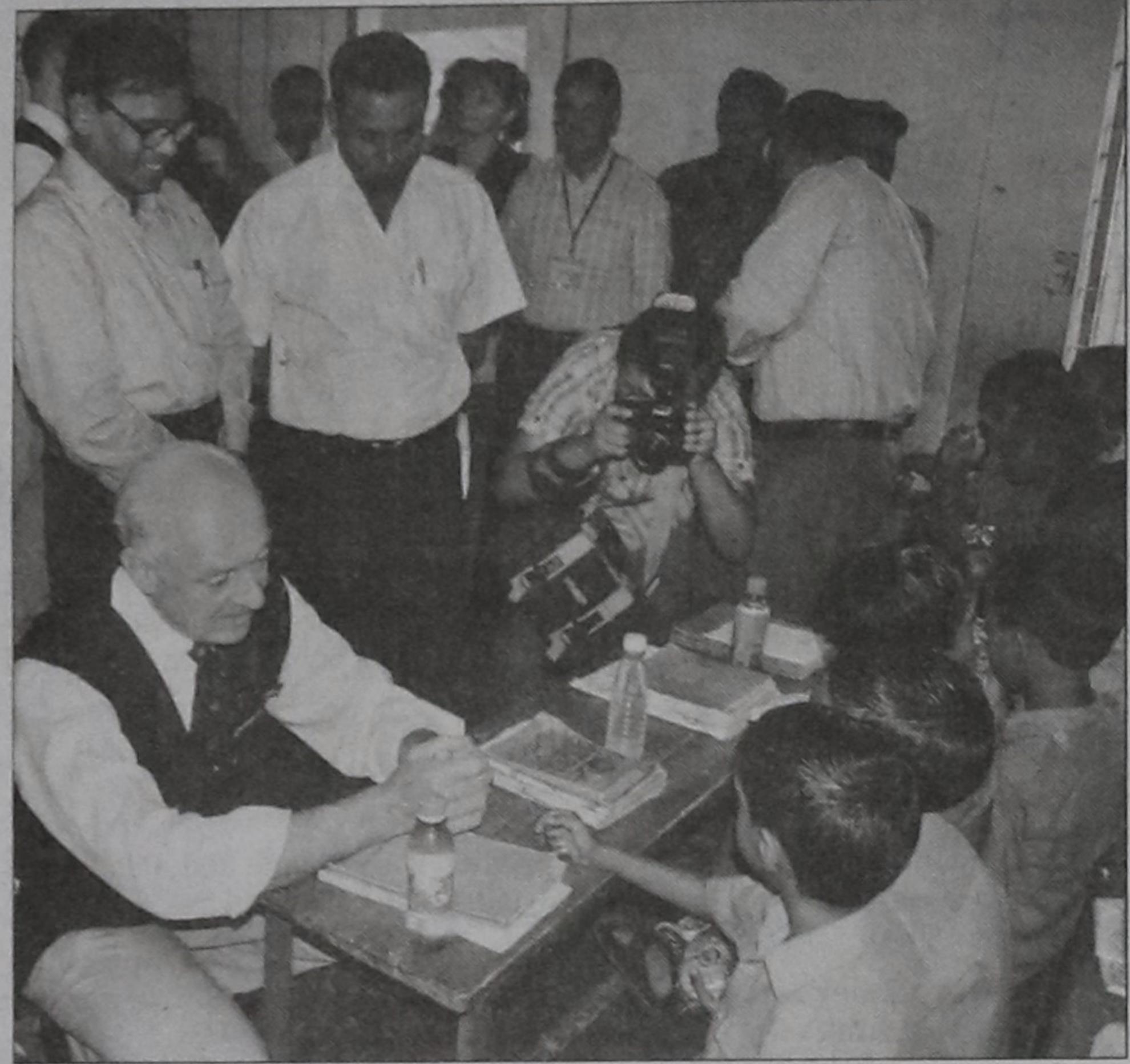
She urged continuation of the programme for a few more years.

The UN agency sources said it has now been working hard to ensure food aid for 10 lakh ultra poor people in Bangladesh, most of them in the northern region. WFP sources said they have been facing fund crunches due to global economic recession.

Millions of people have become landless due to regular erosion along east and west banks of the Jamuna, Bangladesh Water Development Board sources said.

Local government representatives and victims said the frequency of erosion incidents has risen alarmingly during the last five or six years.

Water experts link the phenomenon to climate change.



Deputy executive director of World Food Programme, Staffan de Mistura visits a school in Saghata upazila in Gaibandha district yesterday to see progress of school feeding programme conducted by WFP to prevent dropout.

# Govt to lose popularity if it fails to stop the plunderers: Menon

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Rangpur

Workers Party President lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said the government will be isolated from the people if it fails to check corruption and restore good governance in all sectors.

"Corruption breeds poverty and poverty breeds terrorism and fundamentalism. If the government fails to resist corruption in all sectors right now, poverty will rise and the fundamentalist forces will employ the poor for terrorist activities in the name of establishing Islamic rule in the country," he said.

Addressing the 8th district unit council meeting of Workers Party at Rangpur town hall yesterday afternoon, Menon said, "The

government sanctioned money under several programmes for alleviation of poverty and monga but the local Awami League leaders misappropriated it as the leaders of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami did during their tenure."

"People voted for the grand alliance against BNP-led four-party alliance in the last election to see a corruption-free country. But the people as well as the leaders and activists of Workers Party are becoming frustrated as the AL leaders and activists are doing corruption across the country to plunder people's resources."

Appreciating the government's step to sit with its Indian counterpart to settle a treaty about sharing water of the Teesta River, he urged the government to be cautious about the interest of Bangladesh in this regard.

Among others, Central Committee Member Nazrul Islam Hokkani and Abdur Razzak spoke in the meeting presided over by Mazerul Islam.

sign an agreement with provision to export gas.

"National Committee for Protection of Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Maritime Port as well as the left-leaning political parties are protesting steps to lease gas fields to the foreign companies but the government did not pay heed to their words. I will place a bill about it in parliament," he said.

Appreciating the government's step to sit with its Indian counterpart to settle a treaty about sharing water of the Teesta River, he urged the government to be cautious about the interest of Bangladesh in this regard.

Hearing the news, BCL leaders and activists rushed to the spot and attacked Moitree leaders and activists leaving Moitree tent at the Tukitaki premises at around 1:00 pm.

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