

Child workers increasing

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Jan 30: The number of child labourers is increasing every day. Most of the child labourers come from poor families. This group of labourers are forced to leave home as they have lost their land by river erosion or have failed to repay loans they had used for cultivation.

For their survival parents as well as the children seek work. Children between the age of nine and 15 are mostly found working in restaurants, small mills and factories, motor garage, welding shops. Sometimes these children are seen working as shoe polishers, richshawpullers, mechanics at cycle repairing centres.

These children are paid very little either as trainees or part timer. Most of the job seekers are bound to work at small salary, as they have got no other alternative.

According to International Labour Law, children under 15 years of age are not allowed to take up hard work. This menace has been continuing for quite a long time. At times, these innocent kids are seen working at late light without any break.

Poverty is the main cause of such situation as observed. There are about 30 thousand such children who are employed in various jobs in the district and over 90 per cent have reasons of poverty.

Many of these children who arrive in bigger towns have no shelter but to accommodate themselves in slum areas or beside railway lines.

Social workers are for the rehabilitation of these poor children.

Cattle, poultry bird exhibition

BARISAL, Jan 30: A day-long cattle and poultry bird exhibition was held in the Government Syed Hameed Ali College playground Monday, reports BSS.

Mosarrat Hossain Shahjahan, State Minister for Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control, inaugurated the exhibition.

Ten stalls were set up for the non-government dairy farm, ten stalls for non-government poultry farm, 250 stalls for high yielding varieties of cattle, one stall for the government poultry farms, one stall for artificial breeding and one stall for district livestock office.

Shahjahan gave away the prizes among the participants in the exhibition. Some 68 farms got prizes in this exhibition.

Life imprisonment for killing wife

NAOGAON, Jan 30: A man was awarded life imprisonment for killing his wife, court sources said here on Sunday, reports UNB.

The convict was also fined Tk 5000 or in default to suffer three years RI more.

The case, in brief, was that Mohiuddin poured petrol on the body of his wife and set fire killing her on the spot on January 16, 1990. He was reportedly in love with his sister-in-law whom he wanted to marry.

The District and Sessions Judge M M Munsef Ali awarded the punishment.

Annual sports of schools, madrasas held

NAOGAON, Jan 30: Annual sports of schools and madrasas of the district was held at the local stadium last week, reports UNB.

Deputy Commissioner Mahmood Hossain Alamgir inaugurated the sports programme as chief guest on January 19.

Students of 11 educational institutions of the district took part in the sports event. Later the DC distributed prizes among the winners.

Teachers, guardians, sports fan witnessed the games.

Another report adds: Naogaon Sonali Atit Khelowar Samity accorded a warm reception to Zakaria Pintoo, a national celebrity of the recently concluded sixth SAF Games, at the local Eidgah Nawjoan Maidan on January 16.

Pintoo, who lighted the torch of the SAF Games, held in Dhaka during December 20-27, hailed from the district and is also the Captain of the Sadhin Bangladesh Football team.

The function was chaired by prominent football player of the locality and president of the Samity Kazi Rafiqul Islam Tinnu. General Secretary of the Samity Md Salimullah Khan and Abdus Subhan spoke on the occasion.

Later a friendly football match was played between the samity president and samity secretary teams.

Pintoo played for the secretary team. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

Repayment of loan making marginal farmers landless

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 30: The number of debt-ridden persons is increasing day by day in the district.

About 90 per cent of the debt-ridden persons are farmers and the rest 10 per cent are weavers and small traders. All of them are now struggling for survival.

Indebtedness took a serious turn in 1984 due to natural calamities especially the devastating floods which hit every year during the last few years. The farmers have become indebted due to the sky high prices of agricultural inputs, other daily essentials, natural calamities and dowry system in the rural villages.

The poor farmers have mortgage their agricultural land to local wealthy persons and the agricultural bank to receive loan to meet their various expenses including marriage of daughters.

Many of them have sold their cultivable land and dwelling houses to repay the loan.

A large number of cultivators have become destitute after repaying their loan. Some indebted farmers receive loan from local money lenders finding no other alternatives.

In some cases, needy cultivators produce fake documents to take loan. They know that they would not be able to repay the loan as their economic condition is going on downwards.

The weavers borrowed

money from mahajans (money lenders) to purchase looms and raw materials. They are now unable to repay loan because of their dull business.

Those who received loan from the banks are now under pressure to repay the loan. To avoid certificate cases they sold cultivable lands at low prices to repay bank loan.

Besides, those who take money from village money lenders are now under pressure to repay loan. Finding no other alternative, cultivators give their land in lieu of debt.

Another report says: The blacksmiths of thirteen thanas of Kishoreganj district have been facing manifold problems to continue their ancestral occupation.

It is informed that the prices of essential items for their profession like firewood, coal, iron and chemicals had gone up abnormally in the markets while the prices of their products have sharply decreased. As a result, they are facing untold problems to continue their age-old profession.

It may be mentioned here that the blacksmiths produce different kinds of agricultural inputs like daos, nails, sickle axes etc. which are essential for the agricultural purposes.

Due to lack of necessary fund, they are facing numerous problems to continue their occupation and many of them have already left their profession.

Meanwhile, private tuition has become a commercial practice in the town and other twelve thanas of the district.

Teachers of both the government and non-government schools and colleges are engaged in private tuition business to earn extra money. It is learnt.

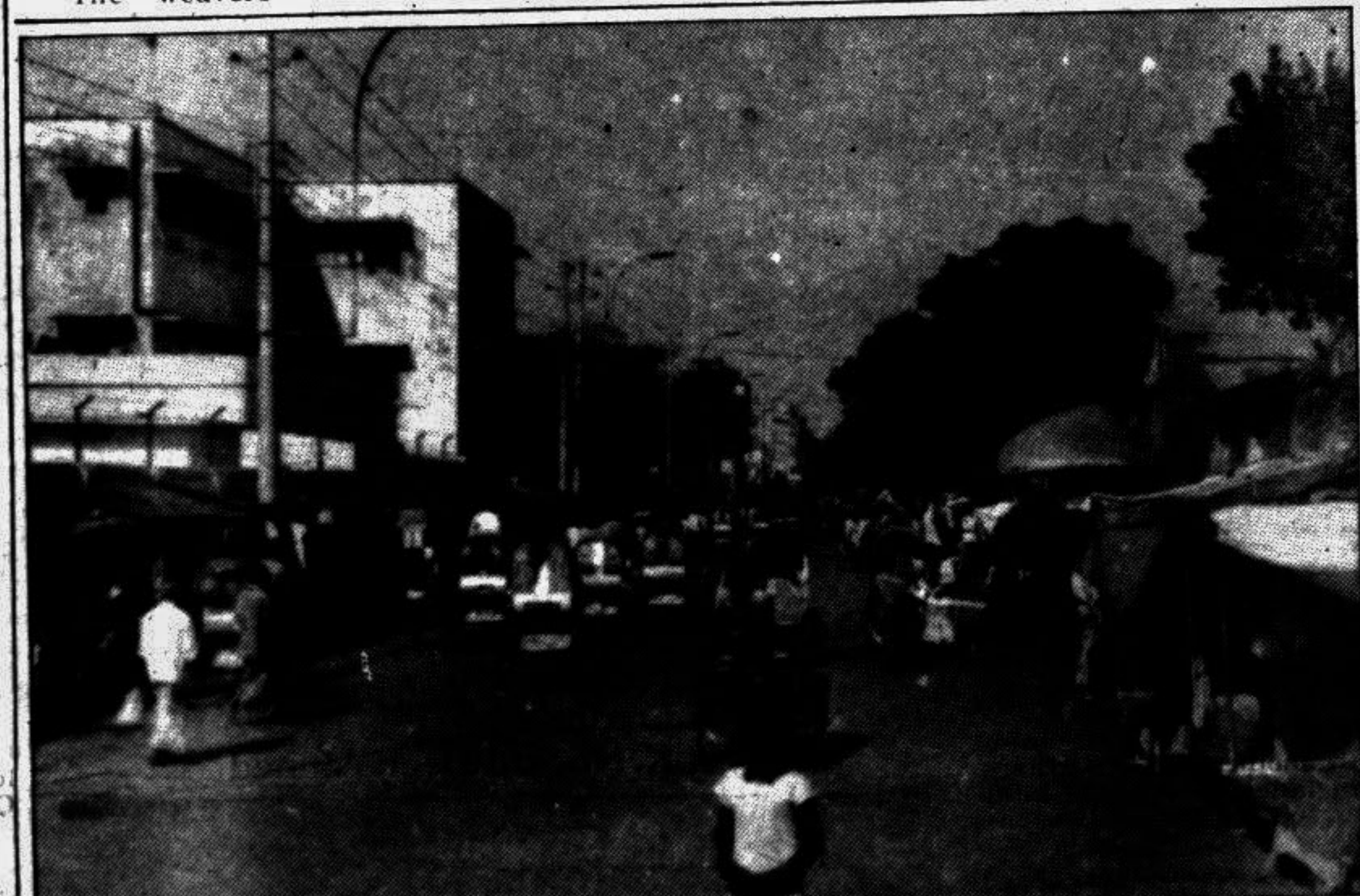
Local guardians alleged that teachers hardly teach the students sincerely in the classes. As a result, the students find it difficult to understand their lessons taught in the classes. The guardians are compelled to engage private tutors to get their wards academically fit for the higher classes.

The students belonging to affluent families usually employ their school-college teachers as tutors for improved studies and making good results in the examinations.

Local elite feel that private tutorial practice has become an extra professional business of most of the teacher here, particularly the science and commerce teachers who get a large number of students for coaching in batches.

Science students say that it is impossible to get better results without the help of the tutors. Favouritism is shown in examination result of students by private tutors, it is alleged.

Besides, the teachers of the schools and colleges other educated unemployed persons are practising private tuition on commercial basis.



NARAYANGANJ: Small traders have occupied the footpaths on both sides of a road at the town causing inconveniences to the pedestrians. — Star photo

Textile mills facing fund crisis

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Jan 29: Sylhet Textile Mills, the lone unit of Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) has been facing fund crisis as the production of the mill remains unsold.

Irregularities done by some dishonest officials also pushing the mill towards closure.

The 25,000-spindle mill was set up in 1982 at cost of Taka 26 crore including the French assistance. The mill is one of the best units of BTMC but it is facing closure for gross irregularities.

A total of 2,115 bales of yarn of different counts produced in the mill during the last few months has been lying unsold. The production in the mill has decreased by 22 per cent. The present production capacity of the mill is 15,000 lbs per day for the last one and a half years. The fall of production was only 2 to 3 per cent few months back. Only 400 to 420 lbs of yarn are now being produced per day, an official source informed.

The Indian yarn entering into the country through smuggling and the imported yarn dominating the local yarn markets. The yarn produced in

different mills of BTMC can not compete with the Indian and imported one, said a number of businessmen.

The smuggled and imported yarns are being sold at the open markets at lower prices than that of the Bangladesh yarn, they alleged.

First convocation of Chittagong varsity Feb 6

The First Convocation of Chittagong University will be held on February 6 at the university sports ground, says a press release.

The Honourable Chancellor and Honourable Prime Minister of the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia will preside over the function.

Each graduate who applied for attending the convocation has been informed about the schedule of the function and other related matters. But the graduates who have already collected their original certificates or have given written information in their application are not entitled to attend the convocation.

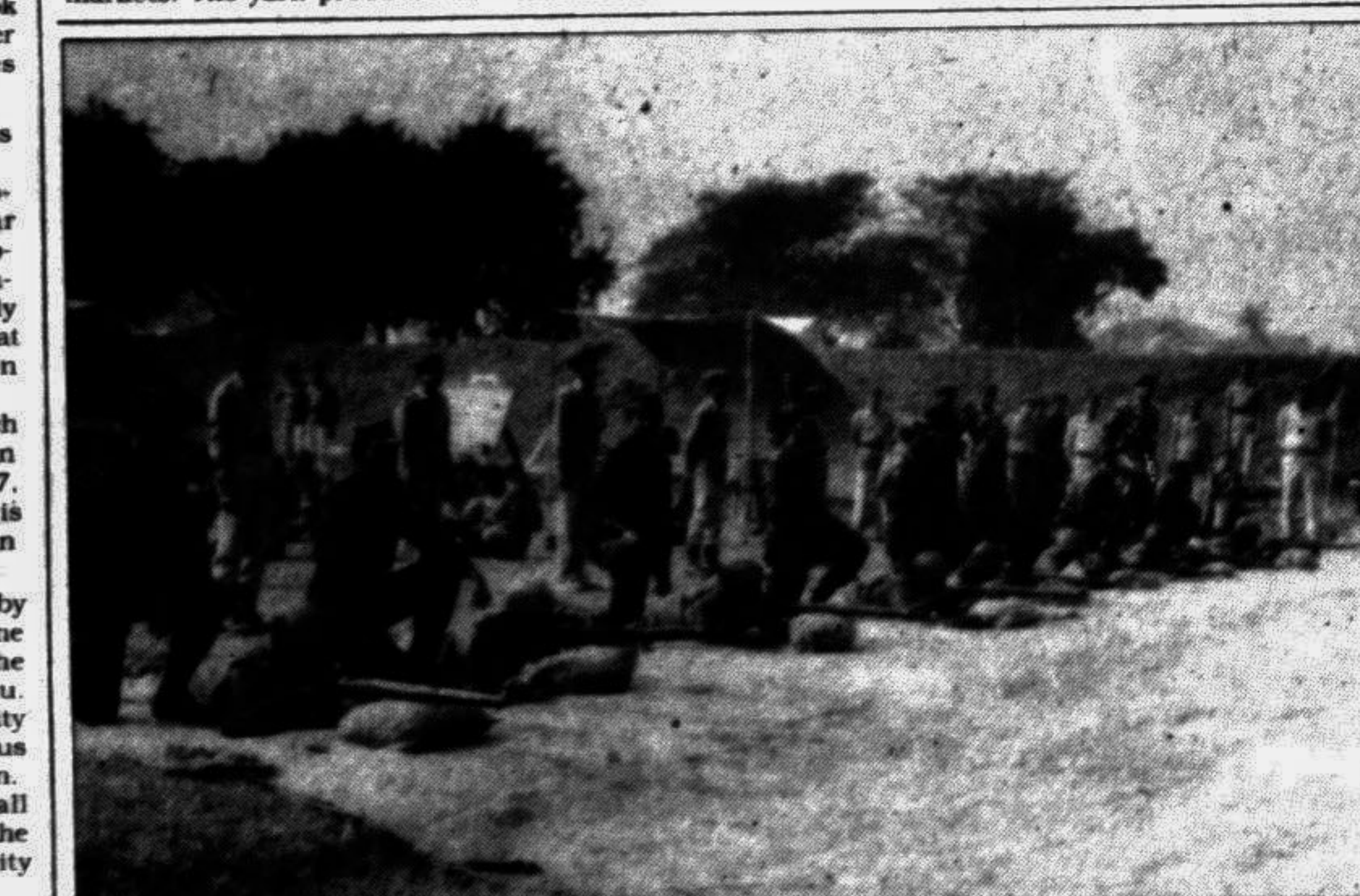
This is why the merchants of Narsingdi, Narayanganj and other places are showing no interest in buying the local yarns produced in the different mills of BTMC, they disclosed.

An official source informed this correspondent that the mill has a monthly expenditure of Taka 50 lakh including Taka 20 lakh as salary and 2 lakh as electricity bill. Now the authority is unable to arrange this amount regularly, the source added.

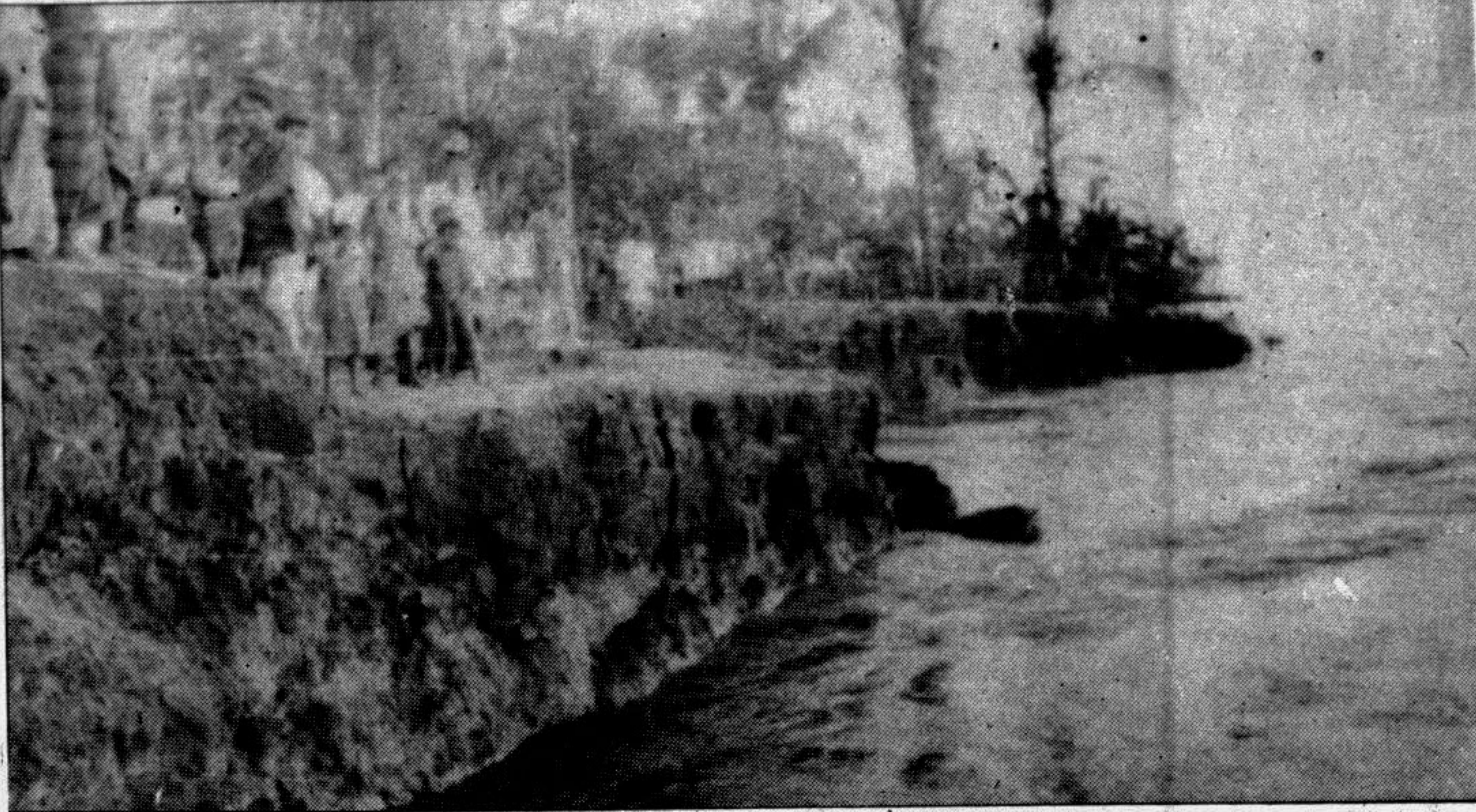
The mill incurred a loss of Taka 3,96,08,000 during the first six months of the current financial year. The amount of loss stood at Taka 45 lakh 91 thousand in the month of December 93.

More than one hundred workers of the total of 660 are getting their salaries without any work, it is learnt. There are three unions including the CBA in the mill. Some leaders of these unions are engaged in different unlawful activities in the mill.

It is widely felt that, a high-level enquiry should be made immediately with a view to removing the ongoing irregularities in the mill.



CHUADANGA: The cadets of Sunderban Regiment of Bangladesh National Cadet Core are getting training on firing during their annual training programme. — Star photo



CHANDPUR: Erosion of the river Meghna in Haimchar thana of the district. — Star photo

Grim picture of a town

From Our Correspondent

MADARIPUR, Jan 30: About one lakh residents of the town are deprived of civic amenities.

The town was made pourashava in 1875 and it was upgraded to a district eight years back. But the town is still bearing a grim picture of narrow and uneven roads with innumerable potholes, filled with drains, littered with garbage, mosquito breeding centres, inadequate street lights, frequent power failure and load-shedding, insufficient water supply.

The narrow roads and lanes of the town frequently experience traffic jams. Most part of the roads with numerous potholes become flooded and filthy after a slight rain-fall.

Moreover, uncleaned drains and insufficient street lights multiply sufferings to the town dwellers. Lack of proper maintenance and repairing aggravated the situation.

Another report says: Absence of a fire station at Shibchar thana headquarters of Mad-

aripur district poses a great problem.

Almost every year specially in the dry season many houses are burnt incurring heavy losses.

Shibchar town, an important business centre. The adjoining Mathubarecher Bandar and Utrall Bandar are also two famous business centres.

These areas are densely populated and different kutticha and pucca houses have been built there.

If a house catches fire it spreads to the surrounding houses within a short time.

The only fire station of the district is situated at Madaripur town. Due to ferry problem, it is impossible on the part of fire brigade personnel to reach the spot of the accident.

The road communication between Shibchar and Madaripur is not satisfactory. There are two connecting ferries on the roads which causes delay to reach the place of occurrence in Shibchar in time.

7 persons held with arms, ammunition

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Jan 30: The police recovered some illegal arms and ammunition from two thanas of the district during month of December last year.

The recovered arms and ammunition included two country-made rifles, one country-made pipe gun, one Indian shutter gun, three rounds of rifle ammunition, one round of gun ammunition, five swords, two daggers one barsha and three falas.

The police also arrested seven persons in this connection during the period. Four cases were lodged under Arms Act against the arrested persons.

The arrested persons are: Thandu, Abdul Wadud, Ansar Ali, Gohar Ali, Zohurul, Ayub and Polash. Among the arrested persons, Thandu and Abdul Wadud are reportedly miscreants and five others are the members of outlawed Purbabanga Communist Party.

Police also arrested four regional leaders of so called Purbabanga Communist Party from different areas of the district and recovered one Indian shutter pistol and five rounds of ammunition, one American single barrel gun, one toshdani, one country

made pipe gun, one 303 rifle, and six rounds of rifle ammunition from their possession during first eight days of the current-month. The arrested persons are: Comrade Roki, Isharat Ali, Ekramul Munshi and Abdur Rashid.

Abdur Rashid who received injuries in an exchange of firing with the police at village Dahgram under Mirpur thana died at Chuadanga Sadar Hospital.

Arms and dacoity cases have been lodged against the said arrested persons with the thanas of the district.

Another report says: The Darsana Sugar Mills has produced 6,325 metric tons of sugar till January 10.

To produce the above quantity of sugar the mills has crushed 75,797 metric tons of sugarcane.

During the current cane crushing season, the mills has fixed up a target to produce 15,000 metric tons of sugar by crushing 1,50,000 metric tons of sugarcane.

The current cane crushing season began on November 5 last and expected to be continued till April next.

Production in the sugar mills is now going on in full swing.

10 killed in separate incidents during 25 days

MAGURA, Jan 30: At least 10 people were killed in separate incidents in the district during last 25 days of this month, reports UNB.

Police sources said of the total, six were killed in road accidents, two beaten to death, one killed by dacoits another allegedly committed suicide.

Two people named Sukur Ali (35) of Madaripur district and Saera Khaton (45) of Jessore district were killed in a road accident near Rawore on Magura-Jhenidah road on January 20.

The incident occurred when a passenger bus coming from Patuakhali suddenly plunged into a roadside ditch.

In another incident one Abdul Khaleque (50) of village Bashudebpur in Sadar thana was beaten to death by a gang of miscreants on January 19 and another Sarafat Ali (45) of village Khalshia in Mohamdpur thana was beaten to death by a gang of terrorists on January 5.

Mokbul Hossain (32) of village Kookna in Sadar thana was

killed in a road accident on Magura-Jhenidah road on January 18. A speeding passenger bus hit him from behind while he was crossing the road.

Bejoy Kumar (55) of village Dhaneshwargati in Salikha thana was killed in a road accident near Jagdol on Magura-Arpara road on January 11.

Another two people named Khokon (25) of village Abalpur in Sadar thana and Harun (20) of village Mosondopur were killed in a road accident near Goral Bridge on Magura-Kamarkhali road on January 4.

Chunnu Mia (40), a businessman of Beroli Bazar in Sadar thana was brutally killed by a gang of dacoits on January 14.

Bakiar Rahman (27) son of Keramat Ali Mollah of village Barasol in Sadar thana allegedly committed suicide by taking poison on January 25.

Family sources said that he was suffering from mental disease for a long time.

Separate cases were registered with the police.

District roundup

MAJDEE COURT

168735 people under FP programme

Jan 30: A total of 1,68,735 people were brought under family planning programme in six thanas of the district last year, reports UNB.

According to official sources, permanent methods were given to 3189 males and 24,473 females while other temporary methods — Pill 82,647, Condom 20,857, Coper T 6,336, Injection 20,009 and Nar plant 3 were served during the period.

It may be mentioned here that though there are family planning clinics in all the thanas the programme was hampered due to shortage of the doctors in the clinic and inadequate field staff.

JAMALPUR

4 held with huge slippers

Jan 30: Local rail police have arrested four miscreants and recovered huge quantity slippers from Moonapara village in Sharishabari thana of the district, reports UNB.

Acting on secret information, Officer-in-Charge Narayan Chandra Roy raided the village and recovered the goods recently.

The arrested were identified as Aher Ali, Ainal Haque and Nasir of Sarishabari thana and Thandu Miah of Tangail district. Police also seized a truck (NO Dhaka-na-2419) with the theft goods.

A case has been registered.

BRAHMANBARIA

Arms, ammunition recovered

Jan 30: Police recovered a huge quantity of illegal arms and ammunition during the last year from different parts of the district, reports UNB.

According to police, the recovered arms include 10 pipe guns, two revolvers, one country-made cutia rifle, one country-made signal bore gun. Besides, 32 rounds of ammunition were also recovered.

Meanwhile, police in different raids seized 610 pieces of Indian saris, eight bags of Indian yarn and 91 bottles of phenisidyl syrup in the last week.

Indian saris worth Taka 6 lakh were seized from Jidhinagar, on the bank of the river Titas of the district on January 17.

Indian yarn worth Taka one lakh was recovered from a field near Mohiuddin Nagar in Sadar thana on January 19 and phenisidyl syrups worth about Taka 13 thousand were seized from Alinagar and Basudeb-Sultanpur area recently.

Separate cases were lodged with the police.

MAGURA

1,57,900 sets of pry books distributed

Jan 30: A total of 1,57,900 sets of books were distributed among the students of 267 government and 195 non-government primary schools free of cost under compulsory primary education programme during the current academic year, reports UNB.

District Education office said the text books were distributed through four thana education offices.

Of the total, 43,500 sets of books for class I, 36,600 sets for class II, 32,000 sets for class III, 24,100 sets for class IV and 21,700 sets for class V were distributed in the district during the current month.

FARIDPUR

30 hurt in road mishaps

Jan 30: At least thirty persons were injured one of them seriously in two separate road accidents in the outskirts of the town on Wednesday, reports BSS.

According to Faridpur General Hospital source twenty five persons received injury when a truck and a passenger bus collided near Raghunandanpur, four kilometers from here. Both the vehicles skidded off the road causing injuries to passengers.

In another accident near Purbha Gangabardi five persons were injured when their rickshaw van was hit by a passenger bus. Both the accident took place on Dhaka-Khulna highway which is under reconstruction. Twenty five of the injured persons were admitted to hospital and the condition of one was stated to be critical.

Two separate cases were instituted with Kotwali police in these connections.

GAIBANDHA

44 degree examinees expelled

GAIBANDHA, Jan 30: Forty-four degree examinees of the National University were expelled from five centres of Gaibandha district for adopting unfair means in the examination halls, reports BSS.

A total of 1040 examinees is appearing in the examinations from these five centres in the district.

Seven examinees were expelled from Gobindaguri college centre. Seven from Palashbari, eight from Gaibandha centre, fifteen from Sadullapur degree college centre and eighteen from Sundarganj degree college centre.

The examination is being held in a peaceful manner.

JHENIDAH

One killed in road accident

Jan 30: A young man was killed in a road mishap on Tuesday at Moheshpur thana of the district, reports UNB.

The victim identified as Jahangir Alam (20) while getting down from the running truck bound for Khalishpur bazar fell down and crushed under the wheels of the vehicle.

The driver along with the truck fled away. The body was sent to Jhenidah hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with the police.

KISHOREGANJ

Law, order situation deteriorates

Jan 30: Law and order situation has deteriorated in the district causing concern to the peace loving people, reports UNB.

Local people informed that highway robbery, dacoity, theft, murder, gambling, kidnapping, rape, cattle lifting, hijacking, pick-pocketing, smuggling, mugging have become rampant in the recent months.

The miscreants most of the time are seen moving about with unauthorised arms and lethal weapons and engaged in criminal activities with impunity.

Besides, sale of drugs is also rampant in the town as well as in the thana areas giving rise to anti-social activities.

Leaders and elite urged the concerned authority to take measures to improve the law and order situation without further delay.