

Ferry services disrupted in Bheramara

From Our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, Oct 9: Ferry services in Bheramara Paksey Ferry ghat is being hampered since last seven days due to emergence of chars in middle of river Ganges following rapid fall in water level. At present depth of water is only four to five feet disrupting ferry services, says a source.

In last seven days ferries with fewer vehicles were plying increasing the length of queue of vehicles on both side of the ghat. It may be mentioned that this ferry ghat is the gate way between northern and southern part of Bangladesh. Imported grains and other essential commodities unloaded at Mongla Port are transported to Northern part through this Ferry ghat.

However, Roads & Highways authority has taken up steps to remove the problems and arranged for dredging of the river. The Executive Engineer of R & H said that dredging has already been started. Taka 15 lakh has been allocated for the purpose.



The BDR personnel in Jessore seized contraband Indian items from border area here under the Operation Treasure Hunt recently. Police recovered three cut rifles (R), explosive materials and cartridges from a house on the Electric Supply road, Sylhet recently. Three youngmen were also arrested in this connection. — Star photos

Rise in road mishaps, smuggling, kidnapping in districts

Oct 9: Road accidents, smuggling and kidnappings continue to increase in different districts of the country.

However, following strict police and BDR actions smuggling in Jessore has fallen. The activities of the so-called, Chokhbandha Party have also declined following special police drives to arrest kidnapers. Road accidents in greater Sylhet region in the meantime, recorded highest since January '93.

Our Correspondent from Jessore says: The BDR men in Jessore, seized contraband goods worth Tk 51 lakh 23 thousand 814 from different border areas of Jessore and Jhenidah districts conducting special drive, 'treasure hunt' during September, said official sources.

A total of eight alleged smugglers were nabbed and 189 cases were recorded with local thanas during the period, the source said. According to information, goods seized included Indian sarees, machinery parts, garments, heroin, phenylidyl syrup bottles, toothpaste, blade, bicycles, carbon-paper, crockeries, medicine, salt, sugar, spices, used band roll of bidi, pressure cookers, clothes, air guns, bearings, copper, hilsa, TV parts, polyster and cosmetics.

When contacted, Commanding Officer of BDR in Jessore, Lt Col Neaz-ur-Rahim told The Daily Star that bulk of the goods were seized while being smuggled in and the rest while smuggled out from the border points in the area.

He also informed that all the seized goods were deposited with customs ware house at Benapole and Jessore.

Giving account of revenue income from 'cattle corridor' at Navaran of Sarsha and Chowgacha of Chowgacha thana in the district separately, he said Tk 3 lakh 3 thousand 810 was earned from these corridor during the period under review.

He said that Tk 2 lakh 71 thousand was earned from Navaran corridor while Tk 32 thousand was earned from Chowgacha.

He also informed that volume of smuggling, particularly in this border area has largely declined recently. It can be controlled if cooperation from the public is ensured.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet adds: A total of 25 persons were killed and 164 others were injured in 35 road accidents in the four districts of greater Sylhet region during the month of September.

Of the total, 22 took place in Sylhet, five in Habiganj, two

in Sunamganj and the rest of the six took place in Moulvibazar.

In Sylhet, 14 persons were killed and 129 others were injured while three were killed and 29 others were injured in the district of Habiganj, five were killed and six received injuries in Moulvibazar and two were killed in the district of Sunamganj.

Of the total accidents, microbus and minibuses caused the highest number of accidents while trucks caused the second highest number with seven and tempo and motorcycles caused equal number of three accidents each. Baby taxis and buses caused to incidents each. The other mishaps occurred due to head on collisions.

During the month of September the highest number of road mishaps took place on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway. Five persons were killed and 38 others were injured in eight accidents on the road while seven persons were killed and 12 others received injuries in eight accidents on Sylhet-Sunamganj road, two people were killed and 97 others were injured in three accidents on Sylhet-Jakiganj road, two were killed on Sylhet-Tamabil road while six

others were killed and 17 others were injured in six separate accidents on Sylhet-Fenchuganj-Shaistaganj-Shahjibazar road, Moulvibazar-Kulaura road, Moulvibazar-Munshibazar, Barlekha-Chandgram road, Barlekha-Shahjibazar road and at Barlekha thana headquarters.

The highest number of road accidents took place in the month of September this year since January 93 in greater Sylhet region.

Our Correspondent from Savar says: Police continued hunt for 'Chokhbandha Party' gangsters and rounded up 10 of them from five thanas of Manikganj, Dhaka, Gazipur districts last Sunday night.

In one of the raids conducted in Dhamrai thana police led by SI Haider Ali and SI Abdussalam, Abdul Halim, 35, a gang leader and Ata Miah, 30, from Gamra Bari village in Dhamrai thana, allegedly involved in kidnapping were arrested. Halim, a self-styled commander of the party was hiding who was awarded 10 years rigorous imprisonment in another case, police said. Thanawise break-up of the arrested persons are: Dhamrai-2, Sataria-1, Mirzapur-2, Nagpur-3 and Kaliakoir-2. All the accused were wanted by police in different cases.

Brutal

SATKHIRA, Oct 9: A teenage girl in a village here was whipped 101 times Saturday by village headmen who tried her in an arbitration on charge of having sex with a youngster, reports UNB.

Julekha, 13, daughter of Sattar Gazi of Soryashirchar in Kaliganj thana, was found guilty of having sex with Khaileque of a neighbouring village by a so-called three-men body headed by Moulana Habibullah on October 3.

She was hospitalized in an unconscious state after the headmen lashed her with a branch of date tree Saturday night.

Police arrested the Moulana and the two other arbitrators, Kashem Gazi and Mowla Gazi, who brought the charges against the girl, saying she had an abortion. Julekha is now under police custody.

Local people alleged that Julekha fell victim to a conspiracy of Kashem Gazi and Mowla Gazi who had an old dispute with Julekha's father over the ownership of a pond.

Last year, another girl, Firroza of the same village committed suicide to avoid a disgraceful situation following a similar arbitration.

Triplets born in Chandpur

CHANDPUR, Oct 9: A woman gave birth to triplets — two boys and a girl — at Chandpur Sadar Hospital on Friday night, reports UNB.

The new-born babies were reported to be normal and their mother Jotsna Begum, 22, was doing well.

"It was her first and normal delivery. The babies were born within a span of two hours Friday night," a doctor of the hospital said today.

Jotsna was married to Abdus Salam of village Binodpur under Matlab thana a year ago.

A demotion

MOULVI BAZAR, Oct 9: Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Rajnagar police station has lost his rank and has been made sub-inspector from the post of inspector.

A source of Moulvibazar district police has confirmed the report and said, Jahangir Alam, OC of Rajnagar thana of the district was involved in a smuggling case, when he was working with Satkhira district police. For his involvement, a departmental case was filed against him.

After receiving order of his new post, OC Jahangir Alam has submitted a leave application. He was later admitted at Rajnagar thana health complex on September 23, '94 and after a day he left the health complex reportedly without informing the authorities.

Journalist held for trying to extort money from businessman

MAGURA, Oct 9: Police arrested a man on Wednesday in the town who tried to extort money from a local businessman, reports UNB.

The accused, Rustom Mollik, identified himself as a journalist.

Police said, Rustom demanded Tk 10,000 from Nemat Pal of the town and threatened to publish a news against him if he fails to pay the money.

On his refusal to pay the same, Rustom published a false, baseless and fabricated news against Nemat in weekly Bartaman Dinkal.

Nemat filed a defamatory suit against Rustom who was already accused for several cases.

Jute growers in Chandpur passing hard days

From Our Correspondent
CHANDPUR, Oct 9: The jute growers of the district have been facing difficulties with their produce. For want of water, the growers cannot process jute fibre on time.

Moreover they can not sell their produce at a fair price. Middlemen are taking the advantage of the bad economic condition of farmers. They are depriving the growers of fair price, it is alleged.

Jute is being sold between Tk. 200 and 250 per maund which is far below the production cost, growers said.

Loans not repayed

Bank facing fund crisis in Khulna Div

From Our Correspondent
JESSORE, Oct 9: Jessore Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank is facing serious fund crisis as the number of defaulters continue to increase. The loanees were repeatedly reminded to repay the money worth over Taka one crore which is outstanding till last fiscal, said a source of the bank.

According to information, total arrears on account of loan distributed, amounted to Taka 94 lakh 56 thousand up to June last this. It was also learnt that 10 certificate cases filed for recovery of the loans worth taka one lakh, was still pending with the court. Meanwhile, all formalities were completed for sake of mortgaged property in auction to recover Taka three lakh from 17 loanees.

The source said, Taka 15 lakh was distributed to 215 people during last year and the recovery rate was unsatisfactory in the same year. The bank recovered only Taka 20 lakh.

It was learnt from the same source that the fund crisis was mounting due to failure of the Bank to realize loans.

Rate of interest in all banks are now equal since start of the current fiscal. Yet the co-operative banks follow simple rate in greater interest on poor loanees.

This has been the main cause of the Co-operative Banks to suspend the loan issue, otherwise deepening financial crisis of poor co-operators.

286 killed in 8 months in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent
SATKHIRA, Oct 9: A total of 286 persons were killed during last eight months in Satkhira district.

According to a hospital source, 286 autopsy cases were done in the hospital from January to August this year. Of these 25 persons were killed in separate road accidents, 31 were murdered and 230 persons, mainly women, were suspected to have committed suicide.

Meanwhile, the anti-social activities are on increase in the district for the last few months. The floating people here are mainly responsible for committing theft, dacoities and other crimes in collaboration with the local miscreants, it is alleged.

The women belonging to the floating people are vitiating the atmosphere as they commit immoral and anti-social activities.

The open trade of ganja and country-made liquor in Satkhira town created problems to peace loving people of the town.

The addicted are engaged in the various immoral activities in different bus stands and other parts of the town at night.

Poor traders

JAMALPUR, Oct 9: Panicked by the outbreak of plague in India, residents of Jamalpur, Netrokona and Sherpur districts have stopped consuming fruits, eggs and other Indian items, says UNB.

The plague-panic has rendered most of the traders, who were doing brisk trade selling Indian fruits, clothes and eggs, almost jobless. Fruits like apple, grape, mango as well as Indian eggs are not available in the local hats and bazars.

The government had banned import of all food items, fruits and vegetables from India on September 29.

River erosion-victims taking shelter

Existence of flood control embankment threatened

From Our Correspondent
eroded. Erosion of the mighty Jamuna every year renders thousands of families homeless. Few can afford to buy new land for accommodation.

The majority of landless families have taken shelter on the main and newly constructed retired embankments. At least one lakh families are now living on the embankment, according to unofficial sources.

Besides, a considerable number of business establishments have been set up at the main points of the embankment. Temporary houses were built at Khabandi, Gondli Bazar, Banglabazar, Reghal, Subhagacha and Nurapur in Kazipur thana, Resra, Santiali, Saidabad and Rairpur in Sadar thana, Rajapur, Somespur, Kadamtali, Ambaria, Chala, Reghulla and Ajugara in Belkuchi thana, Betli, Gopalpur, Ralipara and Sthal in Chowhali thana and Rakra, Rupshi and Jalalpur in Shahzadpur thana. The WDB embankment has

2 housewives beaten to death for dowry

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 9: Two young housewives were allegedly beaten to death by their husbands for dowry at Belkuchi and Kazipur thanas of the district, reports UNB.

Police sources said Kalpana Rani 25, was beaten to death by her husband Banik Chandra Sarker, a fisherman of village Gurdia in Kazipur thana, last night for refusing to pay dowry.

Kalpana's father Babu Lal Chandra Sarker filed a case with the Kazipur police.

In another incident, Raushan Ara, 32, of village Char Rupsha in Belkuchi thana was beaten to death by her husband Abdur Rahim also for dowry. He later hanged the body in a nearby tree.

Old man, two year-old boy killed in separate incidents

NARAIL, Oct 9: An old man and a two year old boy were killed in two separate incidents at Kalia thana in the district last week, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Fui Mia, 70, of Rampura village and Wali Ahmed of Dumuria village.

According to family sources, Fui Mia was beaten to death by his nephew following a quarrel over the possession of a tree.

The body was buried after autopsy in Narail sadar hospital.

A case was filed with Kalia police. Police chargesheeted 7 people in connection with the murder.

A boy, Wali Ahmed, son of Abdul Gafur was killed by some miscreants at mid-night while he was sleeping with his mother in their residence.

He was killed as a sequel to family feud between his father and uncles over the possession of land and property, villagers said.

Abdul Gafur alleged that he was attacked several times before by the rival groups.

Wine factories unearthed

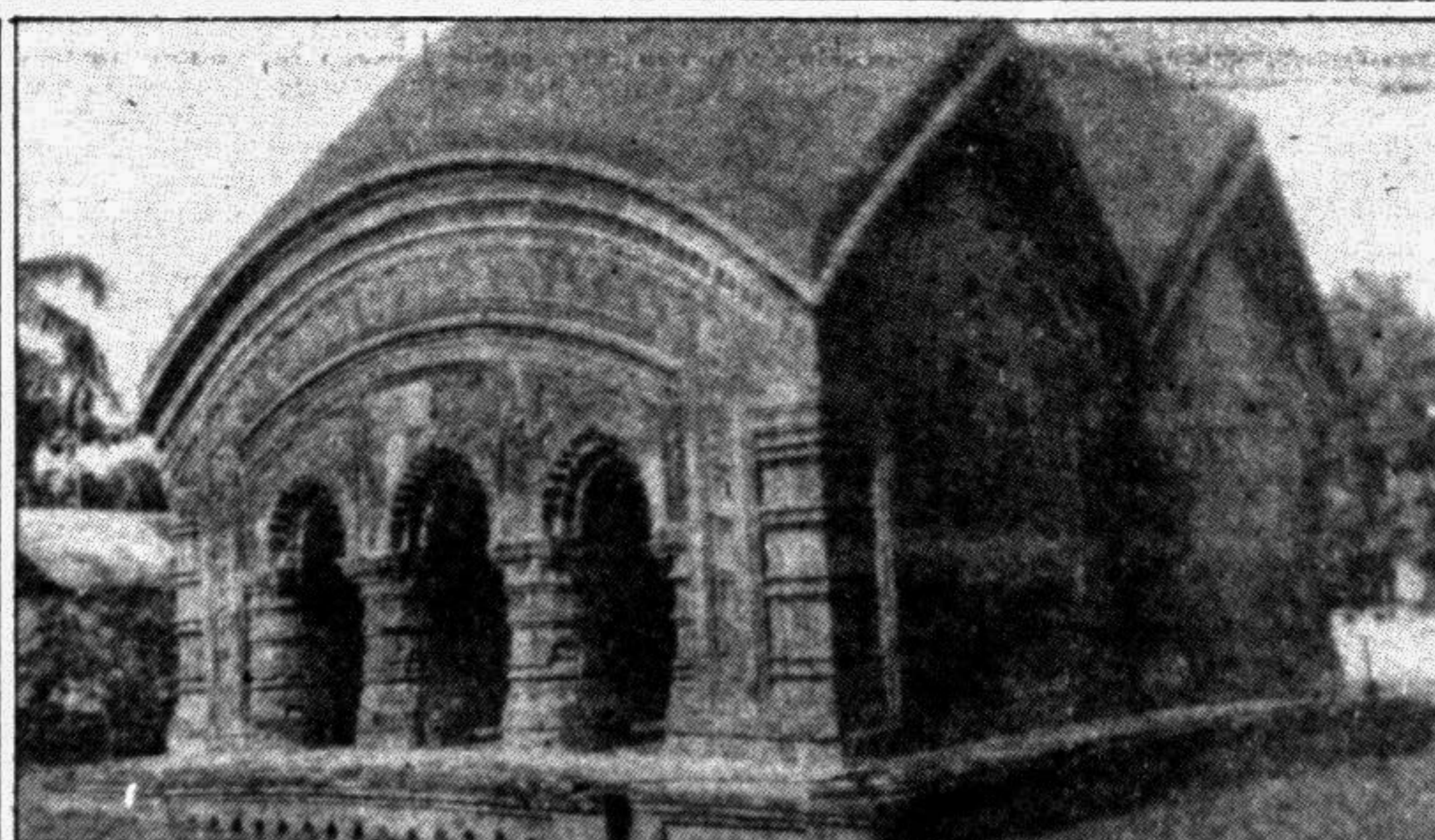
JHENIDAH, Oct 9: Department of Narcotics Control recovered huge amount of brewed wine and equipment worth about Tk over lakh on Wednesday from two areas in Kotchandpur thana, reports UNB.

Acting on secret information, the officials raided Madhuganj bazar and Bazabamudia area and unearthed three illegal brewed wine factories.

Police also arrested three people, identified as Kinaram Das and Atul Chandra from Madhuganj and Basudev Das from Bazabamudia in connection with the illegal business.

It is alleged that wine are being sold in different shops before the nose of the law enforcing officials for a long time.

Local people urged the authorities to take immediate steps against the shopowners responsible for selling wine.



The century-old Jore Bangla in Kalachandpur left uncared in Pabna district. — Star photo

In Kushtia

Programmes set to observe death anniversary of Fakir Lalon Shah

From Our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, Oct 9: The 104 death anniversary of great mystic poet Fakir Lalon Shah will be observed here on October 16. The Lalon Academy and district administration here have been arranged for various programmes to observe the day.

The programmes include a 10-day regional book fair.

A meeting of the preparatory committee for the book fair was held recently with Md. Nazrul Islam, Deputy Commissioner, in chair at Kushtia Collectorate Conference Hall.

The meeting was attended by Saifuddin Islam, Deputy Director of Bangladesh National Library and central leaders of the Book Sellers Samity, Md. Selim, Milon Nath, Md. Mustafa and

Syed. The book fair will have a total of 40 stalls. Of these, 10 stalls will be given to local book sellers. Shishu Academy, Bangla Academy, Islamic Foundation and Shilpakala Academy will also participate in the fair. A number of ministers are expected to attend the fair as guests. Besides, playwright, Montazuddin Ahmed and novelists Humayun Ahmed, Imdadul Huq Milon have been invited to attend the fair and other functions.

In Kushtia, twice in a year, the bauls or mystics disciples of Lalon Shah meet at Lalon Mausoleum — once in March during the full moon (Falgun Purnima) and again in October. The Mausoleum is situated in

Seuria village on the grave of the great folk poet and spiritual leader of the bauls.

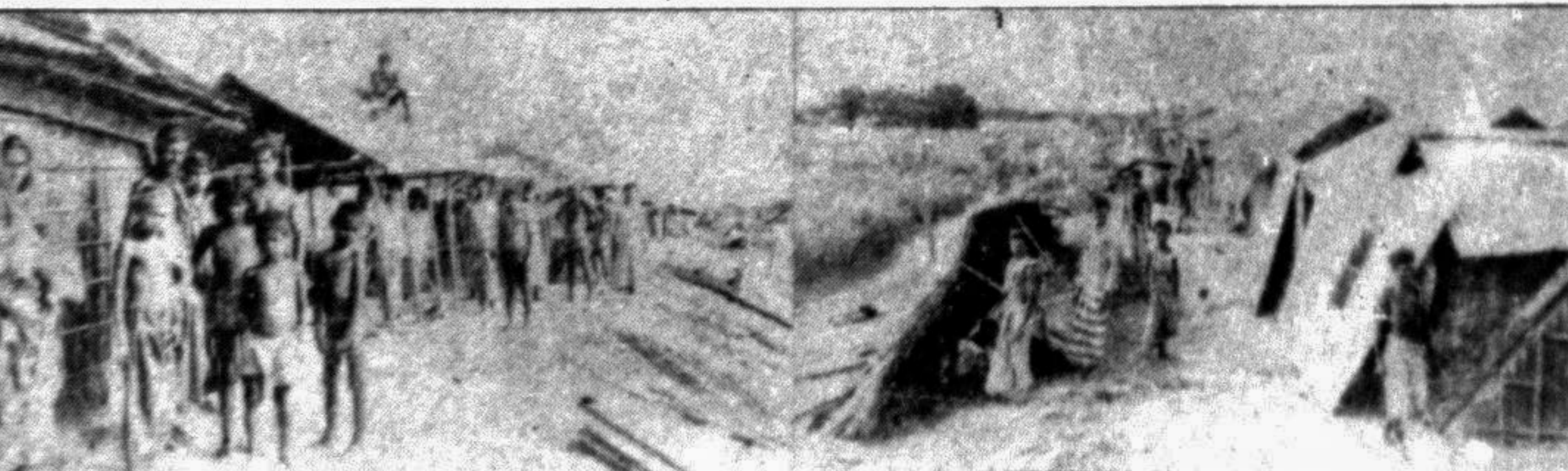
People of different caste and creed gather here to pay rich tributes to the poet by rendering songs composed by the poet himself. The whole of Kushtia town wears a festive look during the three-day long festival. bauls both men and women pay homage to their spiritual leader, Lalon Shah. These bauls who are mystics in a typical way are free from all desire, quite indifferent to the worldly affairs.

They are also considered as religious mendicants — a sect representing an obscure religious cult. Their iconoclast, disregard for caste and attempt to make a merger of

Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim traditions, given them a separate entity, a freedom to confront life outside the prevailing social and religious custom. They do not preach religious doctrine but woe others with their songs which speak of humanism.

They believe that all human beings belong to one single caste. The structure of the baul cult is based on humanism and in this regard sufism of Islam has made a greater impact on them.

However, mystery is there over the birth of Lalon Shah and the details on his life is not known as no written copy is available on his life.



SIRAJGANJ. The erosion-hit people of the district have taken shelter on the embankment constructed by the Water Development Board. Photo on the left shows the Megai point of the embankment in Kazipur thana and the Somespur point (R) in Belkuchi thana. — Star photos