

Newsprint price hike protested in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Nov 5: About 200 angry students of different educational institutions of the town Sunday blocked the Jhenidah-Dhaka highway for two hours from 11 am protesting price hike of newsprint and whiteprint, reports UNB. Later, the students went to the Deputy Commissioner's office in a procession and submitted a memorandum. They also carried out a signature campaign to mobilise support in favour of the agitation programme. The campaign got response from about 5000 students.

Seminar on social disaster held in Barisal

BARISAL, Nov 5: A day long seminar on "social disaster resistance — democracy and development" was held here at the Aswini Kumar Town Hall premises recently, reports BSS. The seminar was presided over by Advocate Hemayet Uddin Ahmed, the seminar was attended by M A Rashid, Divisional Commissioner, as chief guest. Nazmul Ahsan Mizan presented key note paper at the seminar which was discussed among others by Sheikh Abul Hasan, Manabendra Batabayel, Mukhlisur Rahman and S M Iqbal. In his speech Rashid said, population boom and poverty are two great problems in our society.

Road accidents claim two in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 5: Two people were killed and three others injured in two separate accidents on the Bogra-Nagarbari highway Saturday, police said, reports UNB. Anil, an eight year old boy while crossing the road was run over by a truck at Sholomile in Rajganj at around 3 pm. The killed truck sped away after the accident. In another incident at Sharishakole in Shahzadpur thana, an unidentified aged 36 about was killed and three others were seriously injured when a truck hit the rickshaw van they were travelling on.

Youths kill one in Jamalpur

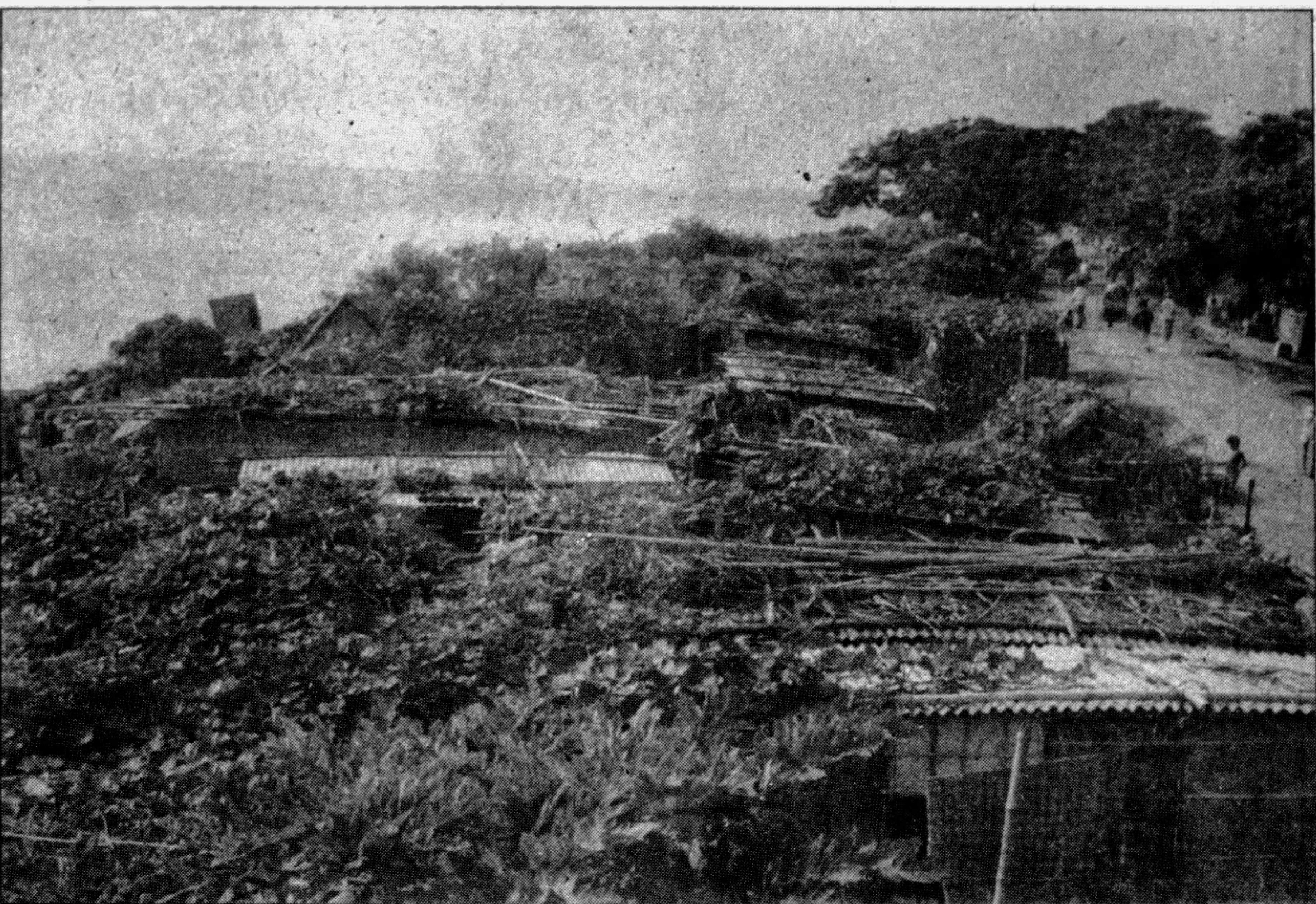
From Our Correspondent
JAMALPUR, Nov 5: One Israfil, 25, son of Nuzrul Islam of village Fulkuha in Melandah thana at the district was allegedly killed by some youths at Dangar Béal in the some thana here recently. According to reports the victim was attacked by some young men with deadly weapons while he was returning home from Fulkuha Bazar. He died on the spot. Melandah thana police later recovered the body and sent it to Jamalpur general hospital for autopsy. A case has been filed with Melandah thana against seven persons in this connection.

Meeting held to check smuggling in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, Nov 5: A discussion-meeting on "anti-smuggling drive" was held here on Sunday with the DG Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Major General Anwar Hossain in the chair, reports UNB. The meeting expressed concern over the rampant smuggling in the area and stressed the need for taking strong measures to check it to protect economy. It was also attended by local journalists, leaders of different political parties and members of administrative units including UP Chairmen.

OMS 110 centres to sell rice, wheat in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 5: Some 110 dealers have been appointed for open market sale of rice and wheat at fair prices in nine thanas of the district to ensure stable supply of grains in the areas, an official source said, reports UNB. Of them, 97 dealers will sell rice and 13 will sell wheat. Each of them will sell about one ton of wheat and rice everyday, according to the district food controller. Price of rice has been fixed at Tk 10.50 per kg and wheat Tk 7.00 per kg. The district has available stock of rice and wheat which can meet the demand for six months in the area.



SIRAJGANJ. Poor people affected by the Jamuna erosion have taken shelter on the Sirajganj town protection embankment. Thousands of slums have been erected along the embankment. — Star photo

Embankment threatened Illegal construction of shops, houses

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 5: Constructions of dwelling and business establishments have been increasing on and by the side of the Brahmaputra flood control embankment and Sirajganj town protection embankment. It is gathered that erosion victims of Sirajganj district are taking shelter on and by the side of Brahmaputra flood control embankment popularly known as the WDB bundh and Sirajganj town protection embankment. Due to construction of houses and shops, the existence of the embankments are threatened. The intruders are constructing houses by removing earth from the sloppings of the principal embankments. Consequently slopes on both the sides of embankments have turned straight and in absence of necessary sloppings, different parts of the WDB bundh and Town Protection bundh's have become weaker. With rainfall, the foundation of the embankment are affected and the main bundhs are threatened. A number of breaches were formed in the last rain season. However, those breaches could not be repaired at many points due to rampant and unplanned construction of houses and shops on the bundhs. The WDB embankment from Shomespur in Belkuchi thana to Enayetpur in Chowhali thana is used as Sirajganj-Belkandi road. Heavy vehicles including buses, minibuses and trucks ply through this road. The WDB embankment at Ambaria, Chala, Mukundagati, Ayungara and Khamargram points have turned risky due to breaches. Occasional repairing could not protect the embankments. The condition of Sirajganj town protection embankment is also similar. Erosion victims from different areas have taken shelter on the embankment causing harm to the bundh. New houses are being established on barren land. When contacted, a source of Sirajganj BWDB told this correspondent that such practice of unauthorised construction will affect the embankments in near future and the situation may go out of control.

50,000 sanitary latrines to be set up in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Nov 5: A programme to set up a total of 50,000 sanitary latrines in 12 thanas of Sherpur and sadar district has been launched here, says UNB. This was disclosed at a meeting of Environment Core team held on October 27 in the town while President of Core Team Shamsul Huda was in the chair.

Pilferage of railway property rampant in western zone

From Our Correspondent

DINAJPUR, Nov 5: Stealing of railway spare parts, slippers and stones from different railway stations in western railway zone is a regular phenomenon. According to allegations organised gangs of miscreants are engaged in the pilferage of spares of engines compartments and railway bridges. Damaged railway wagons railway lines slippers wheels and other valuable spare parts worth more than several crores of taka abandoned in different railway yards of the western zone during the last twenty years are picked up by these organised gangs. The miscreants are active in stealing the spare parts of wheels, slippers from bogies and bridges kept in different places in this zone. Some cases of pilferage of spare parts committed by the railway security personnel were detected but no one was reportedly punished. Crisis of coaches and absence of basic amenities, irregular movement of trains and illegal carrying of goods on passengers compartments are the main problems that create sufferings to the passengers travelling in this zone. Most of the engines are old deplorable and defective and frequently go out of order in the middle of a journey. Due to non-availability of spare parts these deplorable engines are not repaired and over-hauled in due course. The railway liner in this zone are also in deplorable condition. The slippers are very often found worn out. Stones on this zone are also insufficient it is alleged. Due to crisis of coaches a large number of passengers very often travel on roofs and joints of coaches, engines luge-guage vans and guard brakes taking risk on their lives.

Acute scarcity of spare parts have been hampering the repair works of railway compartments in this zone. An official source said there are at least 138 trains running every day on different routes in this zone. These trains need about 1,200 compartments to cope with the rush of the passengers. But at present the authority have only 340 compartments of which 242 are running in Paksey railway broad-guage sections and the rest 98 in Lalmonirhat railway division metre-gauge section. In Western Railway Zone, there are servicing facilities in Rajbari, Khulna, Rupsha, [shrudi, Parbatipur, Santahar, Bonarpara and Amnura railway junctions. Trains on arrival are generally inspected and given fitness certificates by the railway authority. Inspection is not properly done these days, according to an allegation. As a

result, most of the compartments have become unfit for use. There is no lighting arrangement in the compartments, for this reason valuables of passengers are often stolen. There are no water, supply proper security arrangement, adequate fans and other important basic amenities in these coaches. About 170 compartments which went out of order have been lying in Saidpur railway workshop for repairing. But due to lack of spare parts shortage of technical staff the compartment could not be repaired. Moreover, travelling without tickets is creating another problem. About 80 per cent of the passengers travel without tickets. It is alleged. People of these areas have urged the authorities to take proper steps.

Airstrip to facilitate spraying of insecticides

MAJDEE COURT, Nov 5: Agriculture Extension Department has taken up a programme for construction of an airstrip at Char Sullukta in sadar thana of Noakhali district at a cost of Tk four crore, reports UNB. According to official source, the construction of airstrip includes runway, oldrum, godown and staffquarters. Meanwhile, 99 per cent of earth filling work of the airstrip has already been completed. The rest work of earth-filling is also expected to be completed by October. The source said, under supervision of Public Workers Department, the 2,000 feet long airstrip is being constructed and will be used for the plant protection aircraft particularly for spraying insecticides on the fields. A total of two spraying aeroplanes will easily be able to land at the airstrip. Airstrip is expected to be fit for use by November of this year.

Family planning works hampered in Madaripur

MADARIPUR, Nov 5: Family Planning programmes are being hampered due to want of family welfare centres at union level in four thanas of the district, reports UNB. Out of 58 unions, some 30 family welfare centres have been approved by Family Planning Directorate and funds already allocated for some of the centres. But the centres could not be established due to local dispute and some complications regarding the sites. The unions which donot have any centre are: Nilkhi Daitapara, Bhadrashon and Charjanaj unions in Shichar thana; Khalia, Amgram, Bariraj, Ishibpur, Bajitpur, Hossainpur and Kadambari unions in Rajor thana; Khozpur, Ghotmahj Jhaudi, Pachkhola, Dhurall, Rasti, Kunia and Bahadurpur in sadar thana and Balligramdashar, Kazibakal, Shahebrampur and Lakhipur unions in Kalkini thana. Moreover, Charjanaj family welfare centre in Shibchar thana was washed away in erosion by the Padma while one at Kathalabri was threatened by the river. By 1996, the government has a target to establish at least one family welfare centre in every union of the country to ensure family planning services for the rural people. One stabbed to death in Sirajganj. From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Nov 5: A minor boy was stabbed to death at village Jalu Mituani in Belkuchi thana in broad day light, recently. It is learnt that the victim Hasan Ali, 10, son of Reaz Uddin had gone to fish in a nearby pond. Kalemom Sheikh, 42, of the same village had released fishes in the same pond. He beat the boy for fishing and at one stage stabbed him to death. The accused killer was later arrested.

Postal service in Pabna inadequate

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Nov 5: Postal services in Pabna district is inadequate and extremely poor compared to the growing needs of the increasing population. There are no Postal facilities, in many rural areas of the district. At least 30 unions out of 72 unions, have no post offices. Surprisingly in Pabna town too many densely populated areas are found having no Post office nearby. In the district, there are three Pourashavas, nine thanas and 72 unions. According to a list published by the Bangladesh Postal department in the 1989, there are only 125 Post offices of various categories like, Head Post Office, departmental sub Post office, Extra-departmental sub post office and Branch post offices. According to the said list, there is one Head Post office and seven non-delivery sub-post office in Pabna town. Besides, there are eight thana post offices 17 sub post offices of which two are extra-departmental sub offices and 99 branch post offices. All the branch post offices in the district are extra-departmental. The post masters and peons are paid Tk 475 and 450 per month who work only for a maximum period of two hours a day. On the other hand, in the departmental post offices, where there are full time employees like, clerks, peons etc are paid too little in the district. In Pabna town, at least three night post offices are required says a member of inhabitants. However, there is none as yet. There is one extra-departmental sub-office, operating from 3 pm to 5 pm. Only one vander is available for selling envelopes, postal stamps and also for receiving registered letters and money-order at the post office. In Ishardi, the second most important town in Pabna district, there is no

night post office. Surprisingly, there is no arrangement for delivery of mails in the afternoon from most of the post offices. Moreover, seven sub post offices in Pabna town, are not capable of meeting growing needs of this increasing population of the pourashaba. Two more sub post offices are required in Shalgaria area, one near the Food godown and the other near the General Hospital. In addition one each is needed at Noorpur, near Circuit House, in Kalacandpara, another in Sadhupara. Pabna Bazar post office, is very busy. The Post office should be up graded. Among the rural post offices, Ataikula Post office, an

old one operating since the British rule is still a branch office. Ataikula has the biggest hat in the district having a college, two high schools, primary school and a madrassah, two banks, a big regular and daily market, one cinema hall. Senic 1971 Tebaria post office, also a branch office, was set up only to suit the need of the then union Board Chairman, Abdur Rahman Mallick, who started the post office in a room in his house. Now, although unofficially the Tebaria post office has been shifted to another village again in the house of the post master which is allegedly never found open. This is the only post office in the union but it was not set up in the union parishad

Thana health complexes in poor shape in Kushtia, Bhairab

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Nov 5: The general hospital and most of the health complexes of the district have been facing multiple problems including shortage of physicians, staff and water supply. The power supply in the hospitals is also irregular. The unhygienic atmosphere absence of blood bank and shortage of medicines and apparatus at the General Hospital have multiplied the miseries of the patients coming from rural areas for treatment. Everyday a large number of the patients coming seeking treatment go back without receiving any medicare facilities. Most of the health complexes in the thanas have no X-ray machines, blood banks, dental or ophthalmic department and infectious disease treatment facilities. Besides, shortage of physicians and their irregular services and indifference of other staff have further aggravated the situation. Most of the doctors of these health complexes including general hospital are found busy with their private practices, alleged patients and local leaders. The sufferers alleged that some senior doctors were practising in private clinics as well as some technicians. The doctors, it is alleged, compel the patients to go to the private clinics. The life saving and essential drugs supplied to the health complexes and general hospital are sold in the markets by some dishonest staff of the health complexes and hospital, it is alleged. The patients are compelled to buy the medicines from the local pharmacies at much higher prices. Many doctors assigned to work in different health complexes and sub-centres of the district show little interest to carry out their duties and at

times are found absent. It is further alleged, as a result, the poor patients coming from remote villages, to the health complexes go back without treatment. On the other hand, scarcity of drinking water, lack of proper conservancy services, inadequate number of beds, supply of substandard food to the patients have multiplied the sufferings of the indoor patients of the health complexes and hospital. Our correspondent from Kishoreganj said: The health complex at Bhairab is beset with hosts of problems and needs reshuffling to provided proper medical facilities to the patients. Patients from Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria, Habiganj including the Raor areas of Kishoreganj seek treatment at the health complex. The poor people are deprived of proper medical facilities at the complex due to shortage of doctors absence of necessary equipment blood banks, shortage of medicines and accommodation, absence of radiologists and supply of poor diets. The 31-bed health complex was upgraded to 50-bed health centre in May 1994. At present only five doctors and 15 other staff are working in place of eight doctors and 45 other staff. Besides, there is a provision for the posting of three specialists and 20 doctors for smooth functioning. However all these posts including a pathologist and a radiologist are lying vacant despite huge number of patients seeking medical treatment. Apart from this, scarcity of life saving drugs, oxygen and anaesthesia seriously hamper in treating emergency patients. There is no operation theatre in this hospital for surgery. Patients and the local leaders complain that most of the doctors of this complex are found busy with their private practice. The doctors compel the patients to go to the private clinics it is alleged. The out-door service in the hospital is poor. Patients are supplied with common tablets though the government supplies huge quantity of medicines. Saline and life saving drugs are not available in the hospital. As a result, the patients especially the diarrhoea victims suffer much. The patients complained that nurses, technicians and lower class employees misbehave with them. Everyday many patients coming for treatment go back in absence of proper medicare facilities. Scarcity of drinking water, supply of low quality food to the patients have multiplied sufferings in the complex. According to the sources, the overall environment of the complex is not at all hygienic. Toilets remain dirty as they are not cleaned regularly. Water supply also reportedly remains cut off. Moreover, cattlehead including goats move about which are left by the neighbouring people for grazing inside the health complex compound polluting the atmosphere and creating health hazard to the patients. Many patients have to stay on the floor of the hospital due to lack of beds. Besides, the condition of the beds is not up to the mark. It is alleged. There is no generator in the complex. As a result the patients have to undergo extreme sufferings. No steps have yet been taken to mitigate the sufferings. Local people and leaders have urged to the authority to take proper steps to mitigate the suffering of the patients without further delay.



GAIBANDHA Erosion of river Brahmaputra continues in Fulchhari thana. The thana headquarters building is threatened by the erosion. — Star photo