

Construction of Barak Dam in Assam protested

From Iqbal Siddiquee
SYLHET, May 3: The greater Sylhet Ganadabi Parishad had a mass sit-in in the premises of DC's office in Sylhet in protest against the construction of Barak Dam on Sunday.

A meeting was also held with the organisation's President Alhaj Mubaswir Ali. The speakers said, the Indian government began construction of the Dam at Tipai Mukh in Assam with a view to conserve water for irrigation in the vast tracts of land in the

People of Sylhet region as well as of the country should protest the measure. They said construction of the Dam at the originating point of the rivers Sarma, Kishiyara, Manu would cripple the economy and agriculture of the region. It would also cause frequent floods every year.

They termed it as, second Farakka Barrage. Beside, the four districts of greater Sylhet region, there would be directly effected while the adjoining districts namely Mymensing, Kishorganj and Netrokona, would also suffer.

The speakers said that, people from all walks of life should join the movement against the new move of the Indian aggression.

Later, a 4-point memorandum was handed over to the Deputy Commissioner.

Diarrhoea takes epidemic shape in Noakhali

From M Shamsul Faruque

NOAKHALI, May 3: Diarrhoea has broken out in six thanas of Noakhali district. Already forty persons have died according to officials and 5000 others were attacked.

Meanwhile, the district health authorities have taken steps to control the situation but the efforts are reportedly not adequate.

The most affected thanas are sadar including poura area, Begumgonj, Companygonj and

40 dies

Hatia. Local people said remote char areas have been seriously affected primarily due to shortage of drinking water and it was also alleged more than 100 people died and 10,000 are attacked in those char areas.

Noakhali General Hospital source said, another, 50 attacked persons have rushed to this hospital in last few days. Out of them eight patients died.

The district civil surgeon (DES) Amirul Islam told The Daily Star that his office issued 1000 packets of ORS for an UP chairman to be distributed through local UP members to the local patients which was proved to be effective. But people alleged that UP chairman and members are not available regularly.

The DES have confirmed that 40 people died from diarrhoea attack in last few days and said shortage of drinking water in causing the diseases.

The only marine workshop of BIWTA left neglected

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, May 3: Due to absence of proper management, lack of initiatives, endeavour and the will of the foreign donor agencies, particularly, Asian Development Bank (ADB) the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is losing crores of Taka every year through its marine workshop and two fleet repairing bases in the country.

According to rules, any repair works of any vessel and pontoon under BIWTA to be done in these marine workshop or fleet repairing bases. But this rule and system are being ignored and thus the Authority is incurring loss every year.

It is learnt that the pre-condition of sanctioning the ADB financial assistance is that all repair works of vessels and pontoons of BIWTA must be done in any privately owned marine workshop.

Mentionable that the only marine workshop of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority is located at Barisal.

About the prevailing problems when contacted, the manager of the workshop said, policies are made by the authority, we have nothing to do in this regard. But it is true that our desirable goal yet to be achieved.

Severe draught continues 90 pc water bodies in hill tracts region dried up

From Zahoorul Huq

RANGAMATI, May 3: Severe drought in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region has emptied water reservoirs and caused a terrible drop in the ground water level that has left major portion of the tubewells choked up making life of the people miserable.

Standing boro crops, horticulture products, sapling of different trees including fruit-bearing plants raised by the Forest Department in their nursery along with rubber seedlings have been severely damaged. Sweltering heat has caused gaping cracks on more than 5,000 square kilometres of land in the hill tracts region.

About 90 per cent of ponds, ditches and fountains in the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban have dried up due to this long dry spell and abnormal shortage of rainfall in the last summer.

All the rivers flowing through the hilly region like Chena, Karnafuli and Shankha and canals like Mohapremchharan and others have also dried up to a great extent while the rivers with

Contraband bidis worth Tk 25 lakh seized

From Staff Correspondent

PABNA, May 3: Customs authority seized about 120,30 lakh sticks of bidis worth about Tk 25 lakh for not using the bandroll, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, custom officials challenged two trucks under the Harding Bridge on April 26 and 29 and seized the bidders. In another raid on April 30, custom officials seized 30,000 sticks without bandroll from Atakula Bazar.

The seized bidders were deposited with the Ishurdi Customs godown.

strong current, Shankha in Bandarban and Chengi in Khagrachhari have narrowed with less than knee-keep water.

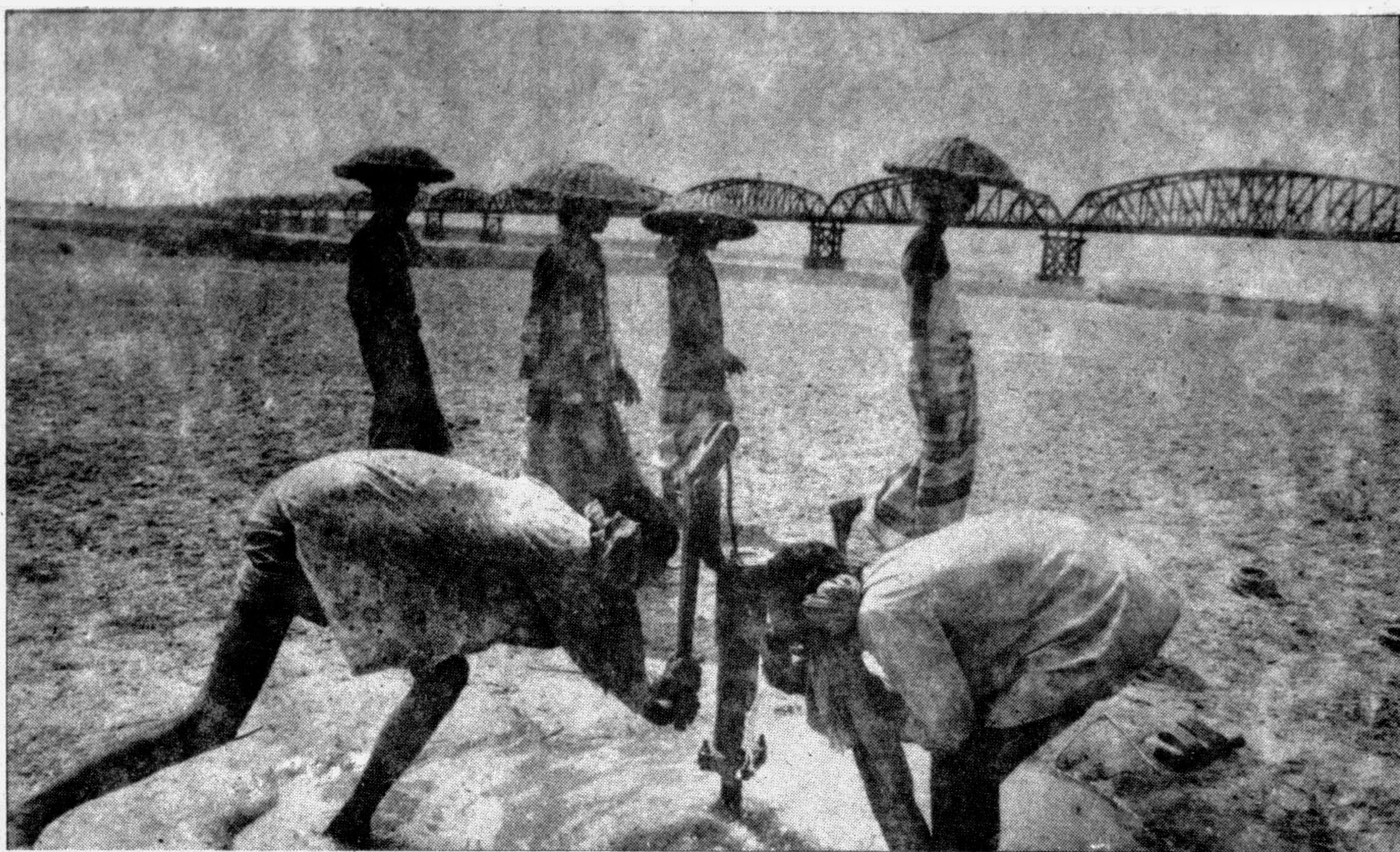
The Kachalong Maini and Raingkhiong valleys are also showing signs of dryness causing an almost deadlock in riverine transportation.

People in the region are mostly depending on underground water for both irrigation and general usage. Meanwhile, the under ground water level has further dropped by 12 to 15 feet on an average. The sharp fall of water level in Kaptai lake has also caused a serious threat to Karnafuli Hydro-Electric Station in generating electricity, the officials said.

Only 15 per cent of tubewells out of about 4000 sunk in the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban are still operating with an apprehension of more tubewells choking up, as official from Department of Public Health Engineering at Rangamati said adding that nearly 60 per cent of the shallow tubewells in the region either have become inoperative or only one partly usable.

Idle pumps, hand pumps and dug wells have been out of order in most of the areas of the region.

Shallow tubewells are not working in Mauikchhari, Matiranga and Panchari of Khagrachhari, Rajasthali and Kankhali of Rangamati as well as Alikandan, Lama, Roan-gchhari and Ihausi of Bandarban hill district where the underground water level has fallen alarmingly. Even hand pumps in Garichtasa, Mauikchhari and Matiranga of Khagrachhari the district with 150 feet pipe can not lift water, the forest officials working there said.



PABNA: These men are drinking water from a tubewell installed in the bed of river Padma.

— Star photo by Anisur Rahman

3 killed in road accident

CHITTAGONG, May 3: Three persons were killed and another was injured critically when a speeding truck hit an autorickshaw at Sitakunda on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway here Tuesday, reports BSS.

According to district police, the accident occurred when a baby taxi carrying three passengers reached in front of Saleh Carpet Mills. Suddenly a speeding Chittagong bound truck hit the autorickshaw from behind.

The passengers of the autorickshaw died on the spot. One critically injured passenger was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

The victims could not be identified immediately. The driver and the assistant of the truck fled.

A case was filed with Sitakunda thana in this connection.

In Noakhali district

Police steps up measures to ensure security

From Our Correspondent

NOAKHALI, May 3: The law and order situation have improved in sadar thana in Noakhali district. Police recovered huge quantity of arms and ammunition and held forty eight persons including a woman during last two months, it is learnt.

Mokhlesur Rahman, Additional Superintendent of Police, Noakhali, informed The Daily Star, recently that on March 16 acting on secret information police arrested one Mostafa, Abul Bashir and Md. Mostafa and recovered two pipe guns with fresh bullet in them a case was filed at Shudharam thana.

On March 18 police arrested one Mainuddin Alias Mohon and on March 30 one Shahabuddin for committed

Valuables worth Tk 1.5 lakh robbed in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 3: A dacoity was committed in a residence of Pashchin Peer Mohalla area of Sylhet town in the early hours of Sunday.

A gang of dacoits around with deadly weapons including fire arms attacked the house. They were about 14 to 15 in number, inmates of the house said.

The dacoits snatched away gold ornament, with wrist watches, clothes and other valuables worth Taka one and a half lakh from the house.

Three inmates of the house were injured.

It may be stated here that recently the incidents of dacoities have risen in different areas of Sylhet.

Shrimp culture needs more attention

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, May 3: Bangladesh government is paying little attention to shrimp culture sector, especially in Khulna zone. If scientific system is adapted in shrimp cultivation, about 2500 kg of shrimp can be produced per acre. On the other hand, by natural system we can get a highest of 100 kg of shrimp per acre which is the lowest production rate in the world. We can earn two thousand crore taka by utilising only 10 per cent of the total shrimp cultivated land.

The government investment in the sector is comparatively low. In our country the nature is favourable for shrimp cultivation, but this sector lacks scientific advancement.

Sources say, in Bangladesh 2.7 lakh acre of land in the coastal area is under shrimp cultivation. These fields has an yield 70 to 80 kg per acre. In Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia has adapted 'semi-intensive' cultivation method are harvesting two thousand of three thousand Kg per acre.

The government tried to implement 'semi intensive cultivation' through BSCIC's pilot project but in failed.

dacoity at Ibrahim Monjil of village Middle Karimpur of Noakhali pourashava. On February 28 police also recovered some goods robbed earlier.

On March 29 police arrested 22 persons for arranging gambling at Sonapur under Shudharam thana and on April 10 arrested 5 persons for the same reason.

On April 2 police arrested Azad, Khokon, Zakir Hosain, Md Shahjahan, Md Ismail and Shirajul Hogue for committing dacoity and for being involved in a murder case at Kamal Mia's house of village Sujapur, under Shudharam thana recently.

On April 4 police arrested Anowara Begum, a house wife and Md Mostafa, Shamsuddin and Ruhul Amin with a pipe gun and 19 rounds of bullets and filed a case.

On April 11 and 12 police arrested Hossain, Md Hanif and Horon for their alleged involvement with dacoity case in Shudharam thana.

On April 17 police arrest

one absconding dacoit named Dawod and on April 21 arrested one inter-district and absconding dacoit, Nurnabi.

On April 21, the newly formed Directive Branch of police in Noakhali arrested one Saifullah (Sherab) an employee of Rural Electric Board with an automatic revolver and 45 bullet in his possession.

The Superintendent of police in Noakhali in February this year ordered to take necessary steps to improve the security situation and visited some remote areas of Shudharam thana to see for himself the condition.

He added that Bijoy Kumar Das, a Sub-Inspector (SI) of Shudharam thana arrested 13 dacoits himself and with his force.

He also said that many operations were lead by him including Inspector Mohammad Hossain, OC of Shudharam, SI Rafiqul Islam, SI Alauddin, SI Abdul Matin, SI Aamus, SI Habibur Rahman, SI Ali, SI Farid, SI Ayub, and Forces of Shudharam thana.

Killers of a day-labourer still at large

By Staff Correspondent

Tension prevails in the village of Harishkul under Nawabganj thana of Dhaka district as the killers of a day labourer still remain at large a month after the murder.

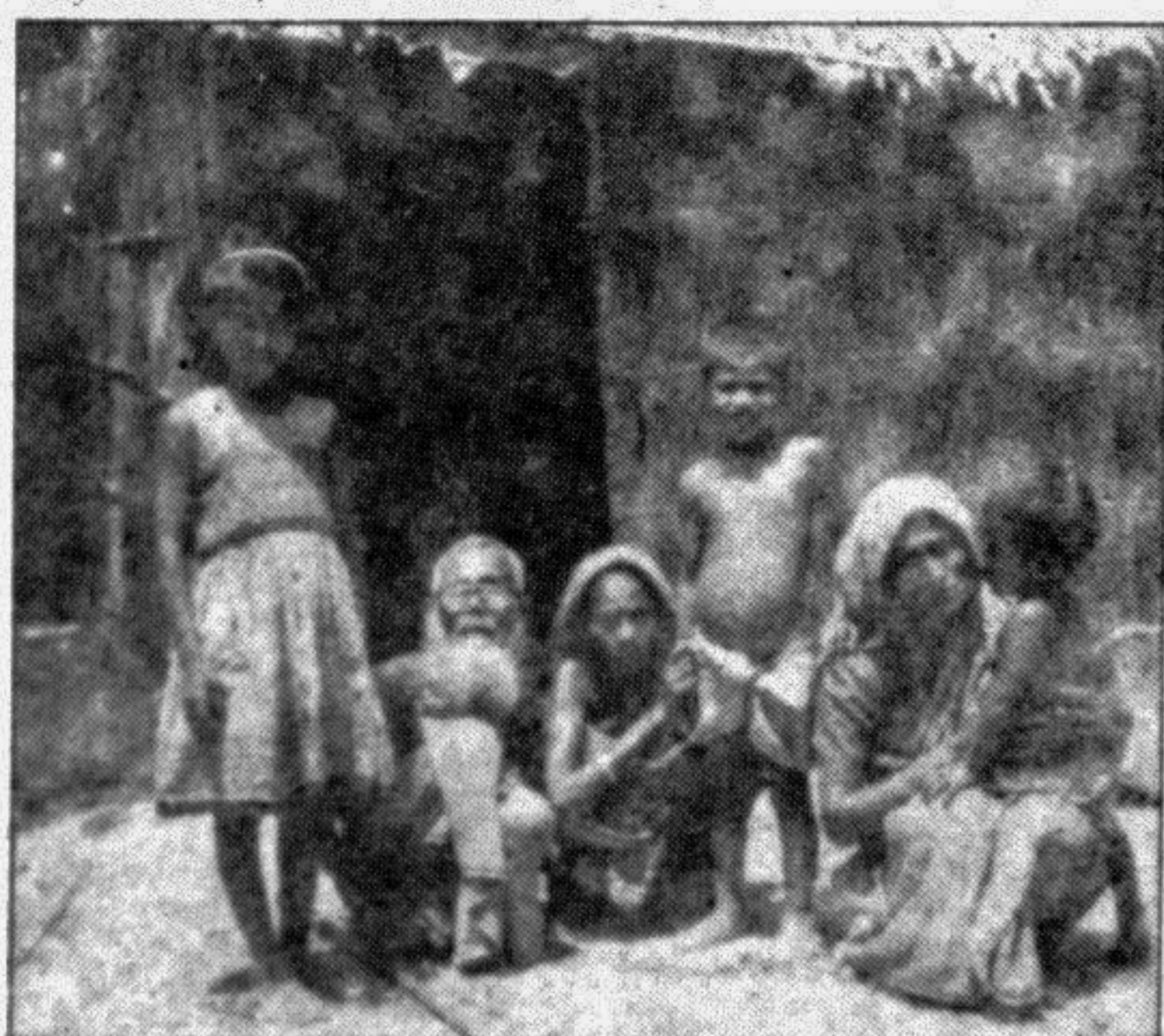
The killing took place on March 3 this year at the Harishkul football field when two feuding groups clashed over the erection of an electric pole.

According to reports, the day labourer, Rafik Molla who

Apparently, it was reported, the mastans wanted the DESA workers to install the pole so that a part of the football field is obstructed by the electric wire.

But the villagers, particularly the young people who used the ground for sports, protested.

The DESA workers fled the scene as soon as the two groups started fighting with



Rafik's children, wife and parents in front of their house perhaps still waiting for justice.

— Star photo

lived near the field, went to the spot where the groups were engaged in a fight.

Witnesses said as Rafik arrived on the scene on hearing the shouts and cries, some mastans from the neighbouring village of Jantrail pounced on him and beat him to death.

The light had broken out, witnesses said, because some mastans from the village of Jantrail intervened when some DESA workers went to Harishkul village to erect some electric poles.

A case was lodged with the Nawabganj police station naming the killers of the poor day labourer Rafik who left behind his three children, pregnant wife, a paralysed father and elderly mother.

The people of the area brought out several demonstrations at the thana level demanding the arrest of the killers. They also signed a petition addressing the Prime Minister, the Home Minister the Police Super etc.

Who rule the Sundarbans?

Police sources said, it is a tough job to locate the armed dacoits' camps in the Sundarbans areas. Sometimes, police raids a certain areas, but dacoits manage to flee in the deep forest

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, May 3: Day by day 'Sundarbani' — the vast green woods in the southern region of the country, is becoming the heavenly place for smugglers and pirates.

The local sources said, due to their torture, toll collection and killings the businessmen

'garan' and 'golpata' seasons. Manytimes, they committed dacoities on the boats carrying 'golpata' and 'garanpata' during the seasons with regular permits from the Forest Department. During this season, it is learnt, thousands of boats enter the Sundarbans for

the adjoining areas of Sundarbans to make their ways safe. Sometimes, 'baualees' who seem to be very innocent, collect honey from the deep woods become hostage and prey to armed hoodlums or dacoits.

During the end of the

leased after payment of fifty thousand taka as ransom against their demand of eighty thousand taka.

This uncertain situation made the lives of hundreds of people, who are living in and around the Sundarbans areas, utterly miserable. The areas of Sundarbani is nearly six thousand square kilometres.

Besides, police sources said, it is a tough job to locate the armed dacoits' camps in the Sundarbans areas. Sometimes, police raids a certain areas, but dacoits manage to flee in the deep forest.

Travelling into the deep forest canals is very hard due to shortage of proper transports. Like, highpowered engineboats with necessary protective devices — police sources added. They also informed that internal clashes of miscreants often create new groups of dacoits. So, dacoities, and armed attacks are going on in the forest areas almost unabated.

Sundarbani is famous for 'Royal Bangal Tigers'.

According to the hunters and Forest Department there were more than six hundred Royal Bangal Tigers in Sundarbans but now also many tigers died in cyclones and were killed by the hunters. But still now, beautiful ferocious looking Royal Bangal Tigers are roaming in the deep forest in the Sundarbans with their traditional royal movements.

Beside, there are so many beasts, deer, birds, snakes and monkeys. 'Chitral deers' are very beautiful and famous for their beauty. Thus, it is said, Sundarbans still beautiful with its natural beauty and beasts.



A scene of sunset in Sundarbans.

are being forced to leave their business establishments. Who often are taken hostage.

For some years pirates have also create reign of terror in the area with their modern weapons and speed engine boats or trawlers. It is now really difficult to identify who are the real fishermen or businessmen.

Local people also alleged that the undaunted dacoits furnished with modern arms and ammunition with wireless sets often raid the fishing boats in the nearby rivers of Sundarbani area or the 'baualees'. Some times, amateur hunters also become easy prey of these pirates. Dacoits snatch away their rifles, guns, cartridges, food and cash money too.

There are few groups of culprits and armed dacoits hidden in the vast Sundarbans areas who mutually, some times, divide their areas for preys.

In that case, normally, they avoid clash among themselves. It is also alleged that there are some unscrupulous people of the forest department who have close contact with the gangs. This sort of links sometimes helps the dacoits to escape from sudden police raids in the Sundarbani areas.

In Saran Khola and Chandpai ranges, so far learnt, are being dominated by two groups namely Badai and Sahadat groups. They collect toll, commit dacoities during

collecting gal and garanpata.

Beside, the smugglers who have found Sundarbani routes — safer particularly trade Indian goods. Mentionable, these routes were also treated and used as the most safe routes for the smugglers even in Pakistani regime.

According to different source, smugglers have created a reign of terror with their armed hoodlums in and

March this year a group of armed dacoits swooped on at least 10 to 15 fishingboats and looted away fish, fishing nets, machinery spare parts including cash money worth about three lakh taka. Dacoits also injured atleast three fishermen on board.

In an another incident, three businessmen who were taken hostage by some armed miscreants were later, re-



Partial view of forest in Sundarbans.