

Flood engulfs fresh areas in four districts

GAIBANDHA, Aug 19: Thousands of people have been marooned for the third time this year as the water level went above the danger mark in the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Gangot and Korotoa rivers on Tuesday, reports BSS.

Amidst threat of a major flood, the peasants continued to plant aman seedlings in Sundarganj thana. They expressed the hope that flood water will not rise anymore.

Flood however, inundated vast area in Gaibandha sadar including pourashava, Sundarganj, Gobindaganj, Palashbari and Saghata thanas. A part of Fluchari and Sadullapur thanas has also been submerged by flood water.

Newly planted amans on a vast track have been damaged, the reports add.

Our Pabna correspondent adds: All the nine thanas of Pabna district including the district headquarters have been freshly inundated Sunday due to heavy and continuous rainfall throughout the above mentioned areas.

Rural communication has also been badly disrupted as most of the kutcha roads which from the backbone links of rural communication, have either been inundated or have become extremely muddy turning them quite unfit for movement. For last seven days, this situation has been prevailing and worsening every day.

The non-stop showers made daily life of the people

miserable. Supply of commodities like fish, eggs, meat, vegetables and fruits became extremely scarce and their prices have also marked rise.

Rickshaws plying in the streets are also few in number and taking advantage of this situation, the rickshaw-pullers have been charging high fares from the passengers.

Attendance in educational institutes has become thin. Many of the educational institutions have been declared closed again due to the rainy season and also due to flood.

At least 50 rural hats and bazars have gone afresh deep under water and hence, trading has become almost impossible. Same hats and bazars were shifted to adjacent high lands, roads or embankments while others are trading on boats. But the number of sellers and buyers is nominal in most of the cases.

Widespread damages have been caused again in the agricultural sector. Vegetables have mostly been destroyed and due to water and mud, tilling of land has been rendered almost impossible all over the district.

Prices of all agricultural produces have been continuously rising and their supply in the markets — both in the urban and rural areas — fell abnormally.

Our Correspondent from Sirajganj adds: Floods for the third time have engulfed vast areas in Sirajganj

district.

It is learnt that waterlevel in the rivers Jamuna, Baral, Bangalee, Karotoa and other tributaries have been rising alarmingly crossing the danger level. The inhabitants of Kazipur, Sirajganj sadar, Belkuchi, Chowhali, Shahzadpur, Raiganj and Tarash thanas are experiencing another attack of floods. Vast tracts of cropland including seedbeds prepared for post-flood agricultural rehabilitation and homesteads have gone under flood water in these areas. More than five thousand people have taken shelter on the embankments for the second time within one month. People living in the western side of Brahmaputra flood control embankment are the worst sufferers as flood water have entered their houses again.

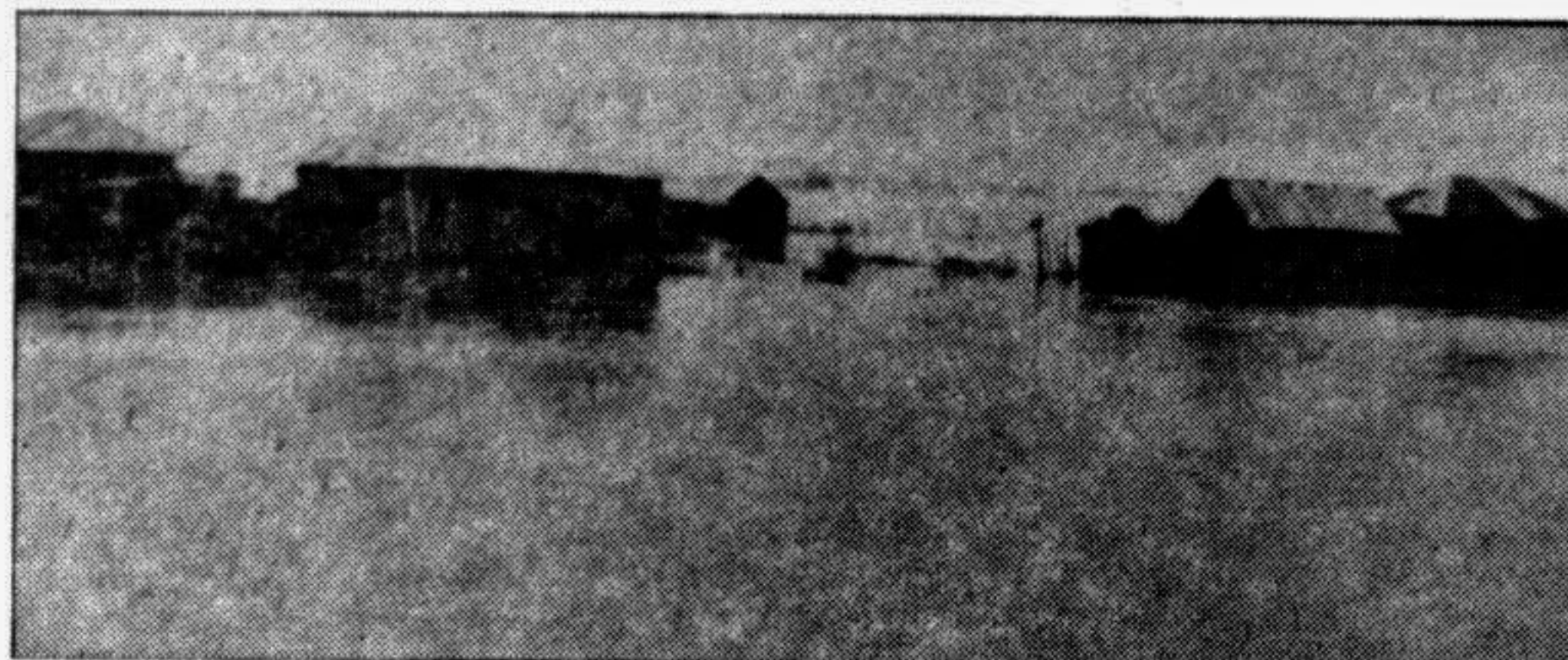
UNB from Madaripur adds: Some low-lying areas of Madaripur town have gone under water with the rise of water in the river Arial Kha, official sources said.

According to the district control room, the river Arial Kha was flowing 25 cm above its danger mark at Madaripur point till 6 pm Wednesday.

Meanwhile, 10 unions of Shibchar thana have been inundated following heavy downpour causing extensive damage to standing crops.

Many people have been marooned in the affected areas and passing their days in great hardship.

The affected people have urged the concerned au-



PABNA: Heavy downpour over the past one week has inundated new areas of the district. The picture shows a village under Bhangoor thana which was yet to recover from the recent flood.



PABNA: Scene of river Jamuna near Bera thana after week-long downpour that followed the recent flood.



PABNA: Flood water is yet to recede from the compound of a hospital in Faridpur thana. Heavy downpour over the past one week has aggravated the situation.

thorities to provide them with relief materials and necessary grants to maintain their livelihood.

UNB from Satkhira says: Fifteen villages have been inundated as flood water entered through a breach developed in the WAPDA embankment situated in Belabari in Ashasuni thana, official sources said.

The flood also inundated standing crops on a vast area worth Taka 30 crore rendering about 30,000 farmers almost pauper.

Meanwhile, some 5,000 primary school students of the flood affected villages have been unable to attend their regular classes for a couple days. The authorities have already closed down the schools due to the devastating flood.

However, the concerned authorities failed to take initiative to repair the breach developed at the WAPDA embankment due to what they said, fund shortage.

Erosion makes 24000 homeless in 2 dists

PABNA, Aug 19: Some 24,000 people in seven thanas of Pabna and Sirajganj districts were rendered homeless and property worth about Tk 100 crore damaged in river erosion during the last three months, reports UNB.

According to district administrations, 3,000 people have lost their homesteads in Bera of Pabna and 1,500 in Shajadpur, 4,000 in Chowhali, 4,500 in Belkuchi, 2,000 in Sadar, 3,000 in Kazipur thanas of the Sirajganj district.

They said about 1,000 people have become homeless due to erosion by the river Padma in Sujanagar thana of Pabna district.

Standing crops on about two lakh acres of land were

damaged by the river erosion. The mighty Jamuna also devoured five mosques, eight primary schools, two madrasahs, three non-government colleges, two junior high schools, six bazars, four post offices and 12 government and non-government organisations in the districts.

According to Handloom Board, some 30,000 handlooms in Belkuchi and Chowhali thanas have been eroded away, leaving 40,000 workers jobless.

Water Development Board sources said pump houses worth about several crore Taka in Bera and Kaitola in Pabna and the town protection embankment in Sirajganj have been threatened by the mighty Jamuna.

Road mishap claims one in Patuakhali

PATUAHALI, Aug 19: One woman died and 16 persons were injured, five of them seriously in a road accident on Patuakhali-Kalapara highway recently, reports BSS.

A passenger bus bound for Kalapara from Patuakhali, skidded off the road and fell into a ditch in Rajpara village. Anjali Sharma, 55, a nursing supervisor of Barisal Medical College, died on the spot. Sixteen passengers were injured, five of the wounded passengers were admitted to the Kalapara Thana Health Complex.

Teacher assaulted by expelled examinees

JHENIDAH, Aug 19: Lecturer of management department of Mian Jinnah Alam College at Garaganj in Saikupa thana of the district was seriously injured by some HSC examinees at Garaganj bus stand recently, it was alleged.

According to reports, some 12 HSC examinees were expelled from Saikupa Government College centre for adopting unfair means in the hall on 23.7.95. Another examinee, Sarwar was expelled while he was adopting unfair means in the hall forcibly on the next day. Following this, some examinees became annoyed and attacked the lecturer Rased, while he was returning home alongwith the principal of the same college at Garaganj. Rased received serious injuries.

A case was filed with Saikupa thana in this connection. Police could not arrest the accused and his associates so far, it was learnt.

One succumbs to beating in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Aug 19: A man who was beaten up mercilessly on Friday by the miscreants at village Mallikapur in Kaliganj thana succumbed on Monday, reports UNB.

According to family sources, the victim Fazlur Rahman, 35, of the village while returning home from the Kaliganj town by a baby taxi was attacked by the hoodlums.

Since the incident he was being treated at his residence. The body was sent to morgue for autopsy and a case was filed with the police.

Police suspected that previous enmity might be the reason behind the murder.

Seven motor cycles seized, four arrested in Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Aug 19: Police, in a joint drive along with the special departments of the law enforcing agencies, recovered seven motor cycles having no license plates from three separate places and arrested three alleged criminals, two from Madhpur and one from Ananta cinema hall area.

The three arrested criminals are, Shentu, Sumon and Helal.

The motor cycles, police alleged, were being used for a long time in various types of crimes.

A prison without any prisoners

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 19: Satkhira sub-jail at the district headquarters is accommodating over ten times of its capacity, while the Assasuni thana sub-jail is left with no prisoners.

One jail assistant with four other jail police have been serving in the Assasuni thana jail.

The existing Satkhira sub-jail has only two wards capable of accommodating only 82 prisoners while the number of prisoners has gone up to more than 700.

During the last government, Assasuni thana along with other thanas of the country was upgraded to a upazila with a magistrate court.

Later Assasuni once again became a thana and the magistrate court has been shifted to district headquarters abandoning the thana jail. Since then the jail is left with no prisoners.

Shortage of fry hits shrimp production in nine districts

PATUAHALI, Aug 19: Acute crisis of shrimp fry is adversely affecting shrimp cultivation in the country this year as the fry in the coastal region of Bay of Bengal are hardly available, reports UNB.

The shrimp enclosures in Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira, Noakhali, Cox's Bazar, Barisal, Bhola, Barguna and Patuakhali districts are suffering seriously due to insufficient supply of fry.

Moreover, price of shrimp fry has increased abnormally following its short supply in the market as the natural sources of collection has dwindled.

200-year old Chandpur town in peril

by Naimul Haq back from Chandpur

On one hand, Meghna is a boon to Chandpur, the second largest river port of the country, while on the other it is a bane to it because of non-stop erosion. Erosion has displaced more than one lakh people of the town while business establishments worth crores of taka had to be dismantled and shifted from one place to the other over the years. A number of schemes to save the town were planned but implemented only half-heartedly as if to allow the mighty Meghna to conquer the battle.

by surprise. The river Dakatia flows through the heart of the town, dividing it into Puran Bazar and Natun Bazar, both of which face Meghna. (See map) The Meghna devoured a strip about three kilometre long of the original town over the last 23 years. It destroyed business establishments, buildings and other property worth over Tk 5,000 crore during the period, said a number of business leaders of the town.

Along the banks of the Dakatia there are three big jute mills, 36 salt processing factories, 25 oil mills, 15 rice mills, 30 wheat mills, five cold storage, a fishing net factory 25 saw mills, two match factories, a fish market, some 400 wholesale godowns and about 25,000 small shops.

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In 1976, construction of eleven groynes from Chandpur to Haimchar at a cost of Tk 120 crore was proposed but only one could be in place. In 1978, about

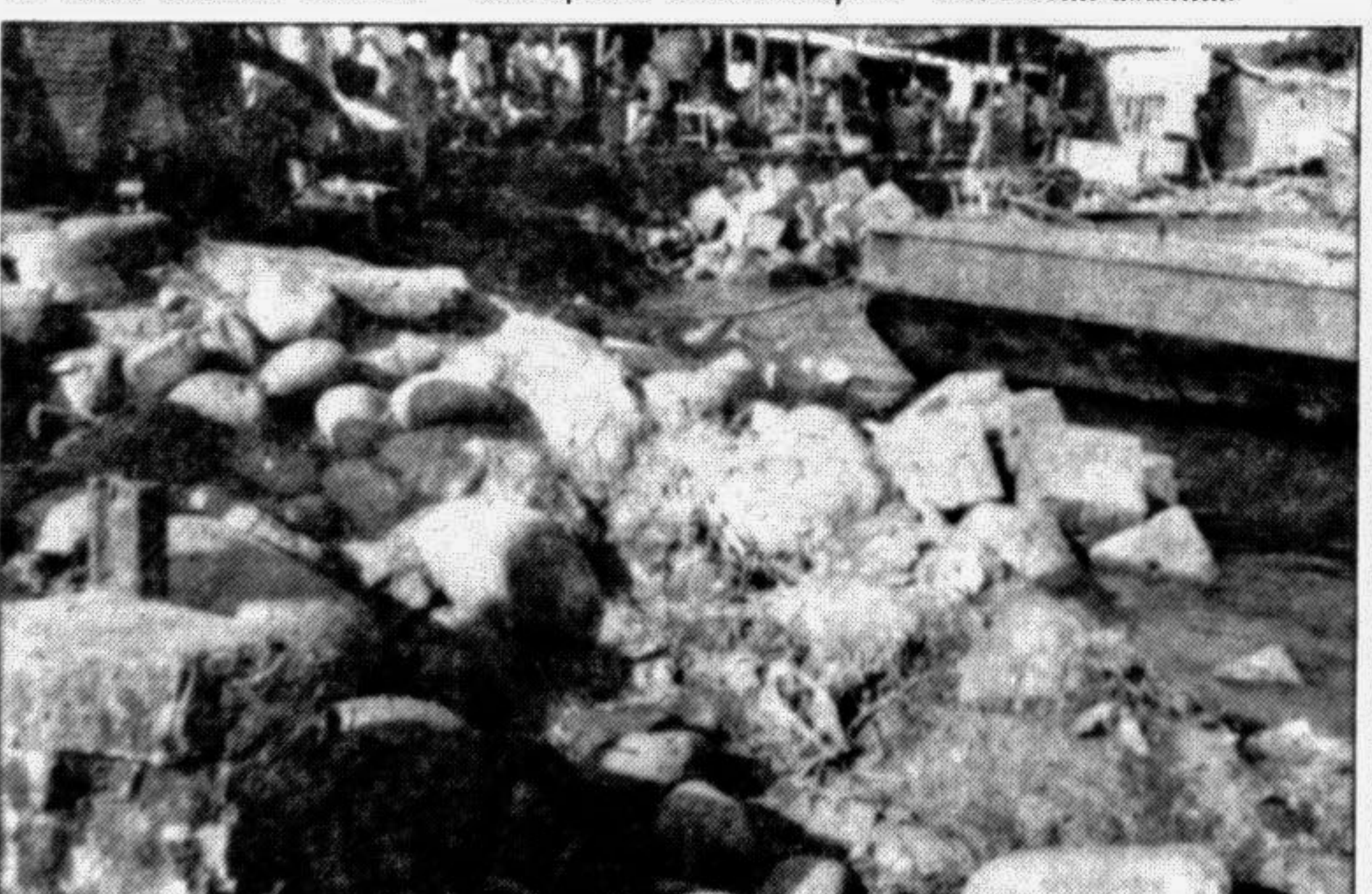
60,000 concrete blocks were made at a cost of Tk 21 crore for dumping to save Puran Bazar. Just over half of the blocks were dumped. The scheme could not be completed due to fund shortage. In 1992, another scheme,

Meghna Survey, estimated to cost Tk 424 crore was proposed. This too remained confined to the files due to poor fund commitment by the donor agencies.

Since 1972 the Water Development Board has spent

over Tk 26.7 crore trying to protect the town. The Chief Engineer of BWDB's North-Eastern Zone expressed helplessness of his department in taking any permanent measure due to shortage of fund.

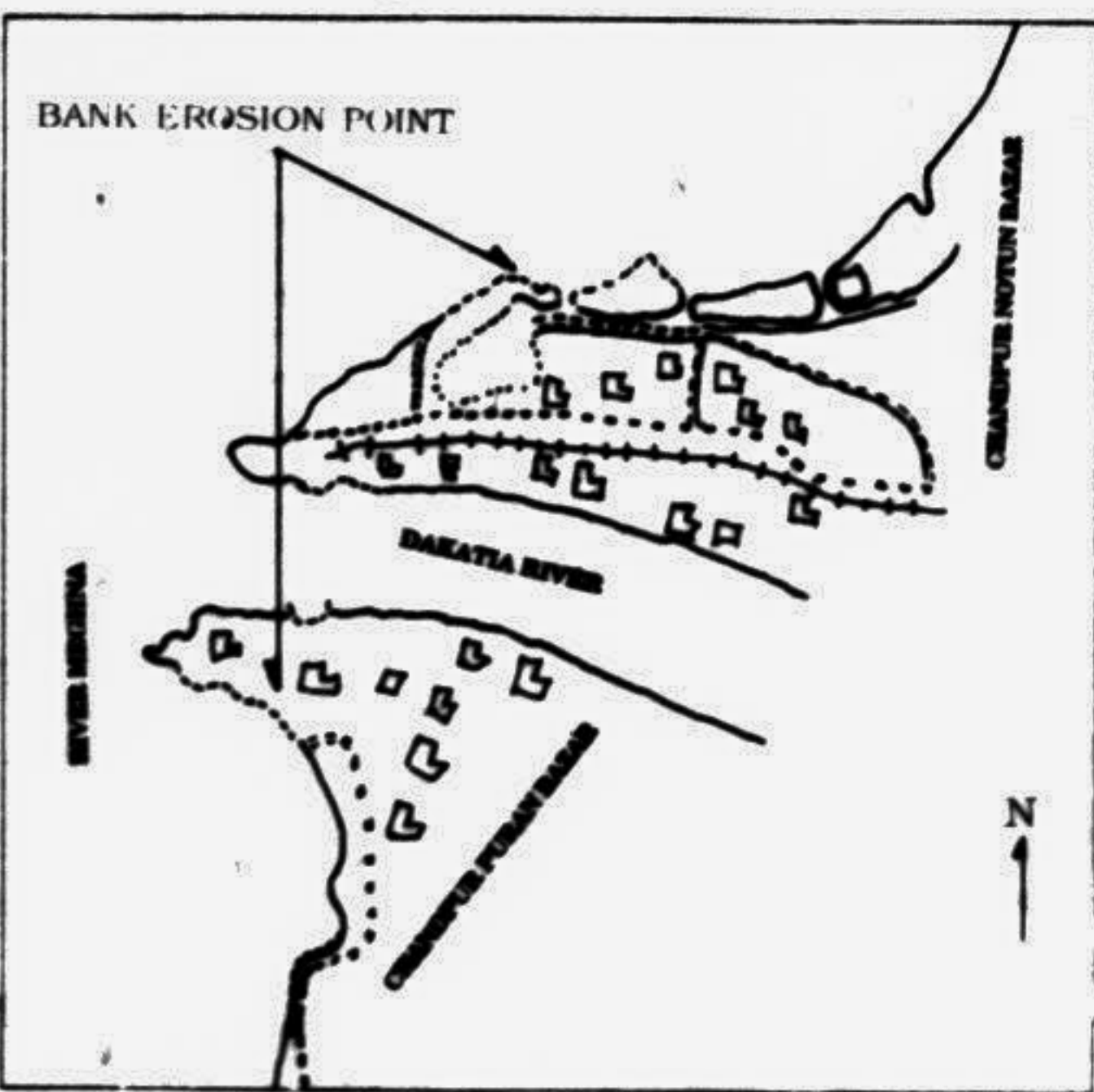
The present position of the town does not look safe at all with the strong current of the Meghna directly cutting the eastern part of the town. Between 50 and 100 square feet of soil along the length of the river bank is eroded every flood season from June to September. Since there is no end to this phenomenon, the very survival of this important commercial centre of the country has become doubtful.



CHANDPUR: BWDB as a stopgap measure, dumping concrete blocks and boulders in the Nutun Bazar area of the town.

The association of Chandpur industrialists and traders has offered a few recommendations to save the old and important commercial town. These include:

- * Regular dredging of Padma, Meghna and Dakatia rivers;
- * Removal of a large number of sunken steam boats and country boats from the beds of these rivers;
- * Construction of embankments at Shaitnal, Safarnali and Haimchar; and
- * Creation of durable groynes and spurs to reduce the fury of the river currents.



Map showing erosion points at Notun Bazar and Puran Bazar areas (broken lines).

CHANDPUR, Aug 19: The country's largest merchant centre at Chandpur faces extinction as the Meghna keeps on devouring it year after year. This year's destruction has surpassed all previous records.

For the first time the town experienced simultaneous erosion on both Puran Bazar and Natun Bazar sides this year. This is proving too much for the Water Development Board which



CHANDPUR: Some erosion victims standing in front of their temporary shelters.

MV Dinner-2 still lies beneath Meghna

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, Aug 19: One year has passed since the launch "MV Dinner 2" sunk in the confluence of the rivers Meghna and Dakatia near Chandpur launch terminal. The launch with about two hundred passengers on board sunk on August 20 last year. But the launch could not be traced out by the BIWTA even after 12 months of time.

A search operation to locate and salvage the launch was carried out jointly by the BIWTA, Navy, Fire Service and Chandpur district administration. But they failed to locate the sunken launch as yet. The search operation continued for three months.

Following that the operation programme was suspended on October. The cause of suspension of search operation was termed as 'hazardous' near the place of accident.

The launch was bound for Mallar Hat in Sariapur from Dhaka. A total of fifty one bodies of passengers of the ill-fated launch were recovered. Among them only four could be identified. The number of unfortunate passengers trapped inside the haul of the launch was washed away, it was believed the strong current of the river caused this.

Failure to locate the launch has sparked sharp resentment among the public particularly from the relatives of the victims. The people cannot believe that in this modern age of technology, a sunken vessel could not be traced out from a river. The search, rescue and salvage unit of the BIWATA is poor, ill-equipped and backdated, as was observed during the search for the sunken vessel. It is learnt that 'Hamza', the main vessel of the salvage unit could pull a weight maximum load of 60 tons but there are many launches in the country those weight over hundred tons.

An inquiry team was constituted by the government soon after the accident.

The members of the team visited Chandpur many times and recorded witnesses. But the findings of the enquiry have not yet been disclosed. It is also essential to salvage the launch as it sunk at the gateway of the Chandpur launch terminal. Otherwise it will hamper the navigation during the dry season.

17 sued for forging registration

From CHT Correspondent

RANGAMATI, Aug 19: The Bureau of Anti-Corruption indicted 17 persons including six headmasters of high schools in Chittagong Hill Tracts, nine employees of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Comilla (BISEC) and one clerk of a school and another person for forging registration of 605 students of six high schools in six separate cases lodged with Comilla Kotwali police, official sources said.

After thorough investigation, five cases were filed by the district Anti-Corruption Officer, Gazi Md Ali Akbar and the other by Inspector, Abdul Bakr.

Decomposed body of a missing youth found

SATKHIRA, Aug 19: The decomposed body of a missing youth was recovered from a roadside ditch in village Katanda of sadar thana on Monday, reports UNB.

The victim Kamrul, 18 of the same village, who was missing since Friday, was killed by some unknown assailants, police said.

But the motive behind the killing could not be known immediately. A case was registered with the police. Another report says, sadar thana police on Monday arrested two absconding accused, Abdul Barez and Jamal Gazi and recovered one pipe-gun from their possession.