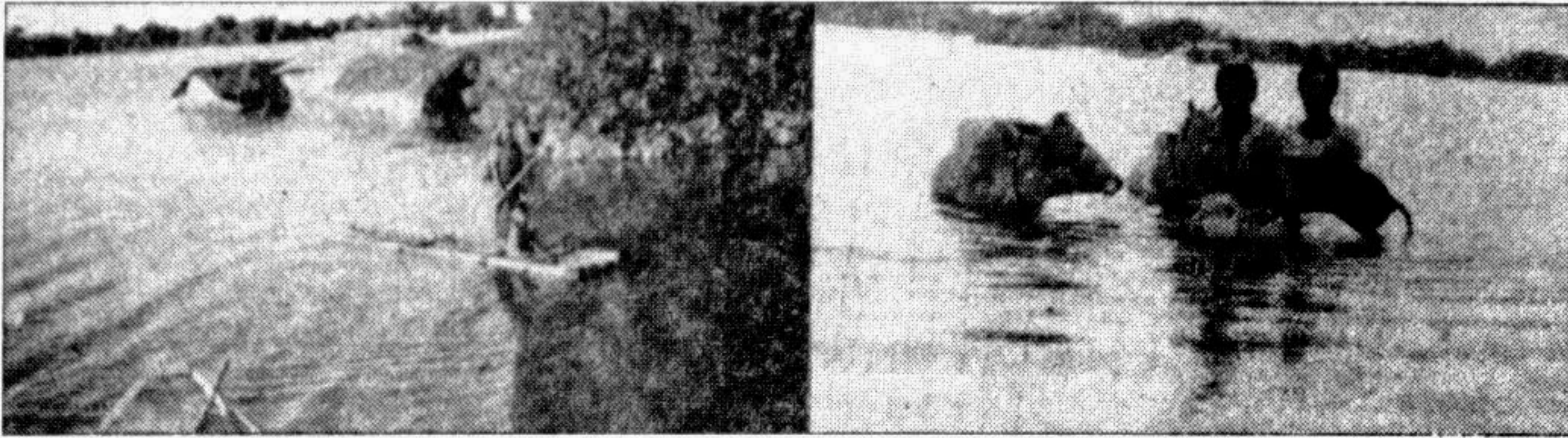


70 pc areas in Sherpur flooded

Heavy downpour, erosion further aggravate situation

From Ratan Chowdhury



FLOOD VICTIMS: A mother along with her son moves to a safer place as flood water freshly engulfed their village Dhutichora in Gaibandha district. Two farmers (R) in Islampur thana of Jamalpur heading for a safer shelter.

SHERPUR, Aug 22: The third spell of flood hit the district which started from last week with the onrush of hilly waters across from Indian border, sharply rising water level in all the rivers under the district.

In the period the water level of Brahmaputra already crossed the danger level Friday. The river Brahmaputra is flowing 18 cm above the danger level at Sherpur-Jamalpur ferry ghat point and the road communication between Sherpur to Dhaka via Jamalpur-Tangail has been disrupted in the two consecutive days. It is mentionable here that the incessant rainfall over six to eight consecutive days has paralysed normal life in the district.

Forty-five unions out of fifty-one in five thanas of the district were badly affected by the third spell of flood. About 70 per cent areas of the district went under waters.

The administration is yet to estimate the losses finally due to flood.

According to local sources, the third spell flood already destroyed recently transplanted Aman paddy on over seventy thousand acres of land. Many new point of the flood protection embankment have been damaged. About five kilometre flood protection embankment in various places of the district were badly damaged. Many dwellings damaged due to second spell flood and those were re-constructed. The third spell of flood again damaged such types of dwellings.

On the other hand, erosion has taken a serious turn in same river adjoining areas of the district.

At least one lakh people have been marooned in different thanas of the district. No rescue operation as yet have started to evacuate the flood, erosion victims, only some voluntary groups are operating. The worst affected areas are, Kamarerchar union, Charpakkhimari union, Dhala union, Kamaria union, Boulayerchar union, Charnu-chariya union, Charshepur union, Bajitkhila union and Roubahetmariy union of sadar Sherpur thana, Gagra union, Hatibandha union, Hashlibatiya union, Ranygamati union, Kanasha Dynshil union of Jhenaitga thana, Nayabel union, Bagbere union, Kaloshpara union, Zagania union, Raznagore union and Marichpuran union of Nalifabari thana, Kurikahaniya union, Khoirakazir Char union and Belaya union of Srebordi thana, five unions of Nakla thana in the district.



A father with his children on board a raft in search of shelter in the flood hit Sherpur district. About 70 pc area of the district has been inundated third time this year.

At least five lakh people out of twelve lakh people of the district are passing their days in misery.

Meanwhile, the river Brahmaputra while eroding the bank of eastern side has also devoured vast tract of land including the approach road towards Sherpur-Jamalpur ferry ghat compelling Roads and Highways Department to construct alternative road to maintain uninterrupted communication from Sherpur to Dhaka via Jamalpur. In total erosion of river Brahmaputra and Bhugai have rendered over 20 thousand people homeless in two thanas of the district during last 15 years.

Our Correspondent from Pabna adds: Flood, with all its fury, came for the third time within a short span of seven weeks in Pabna next to river Jamuna and Padma, which caused havoc to about four lakh people of eight, out of nine thanas of the district.

At least 50,000 men, women and children were lying marooned in Bera, Sujaganar, Faridpur and Bhangora thanas while vast tracts of land in Pabna sadar, Santhia, Ishurdi and Chatmohar

thanas have already been inundated.

Over 175 educational institutions, 8 hats and bazars, nearly 80,000 acres of crop land, miles and miles of village roads, hospitals, rural post offices, union parishad offices became submerged.

Over one lakh people belonging to eight flood-affected thanas, namely, Bera, Sujaganar, Faridpur, Santhia, Bhangora, Chatmohar, Ishurdi and Pabna sadar, specially from the char areas, were compelled to take shelter on flood control embankments, nearby high lands, schools or colleges and in union parishad offices or fields. They are mostly living under open sky and were helplessly braving torrential rains and scorching surveys and other adverse situations. They need food, shelter, clothings, drinking water, medicines etc.

Recurrence of flood for third time brought untold miseries even to those not directly affected by flood. Commodity prices have gone up abnormally—supply of essential commodities, vegetables, fish, eggs, milk etc. were scarce as widespread

damages have been rendered to all sorts of standing crops, roads.

Our Correspondent from Jamalpur in the meantime adds: Flood for the second time in less than 30 days—has further worsened the situation in the district owing to continuous downpour and onrush of hilly waters from across the Indian region following rise in the water level in the rivers of Jamuna, Brahmaputra and its tributaries. In the district fresh areas went under water, according to official and unofficial report received till Sunday.

The river Jamuna flowing 48 cm above danger mark at Bahadurabad ghat and Brahmaputra flowing 28 cm above its danger market Dewanganj point Sunday evening, according to the district WDB sources.

The flood situation in the low-lying areas of the district and its surrounding areas remained unchanged.

The total number of flood affected unions stands at 45 out of 68 in seven thanas and some areas of Jamalpur pourashava were also submerged.

According to district administration sources, about 50,000 people belonging to 6,000 families of the district have been affected. Over 8000 houses have been totally damaged and 8,000 houses were partially damaged by the flood.

A total of 16 km pucca roads and 6,000 miles of rural kutcha road have gone under flood water. Seven bridges, 17 culverts were totally damaged.

Official sources said about 2.5 lakh acres of land of newly planted aman crops had gone under two to 10 feet deep flood water. The planted aman paddy are totally or partially damaged. District fisheries department sources said about 10 hectares and about 100 fish beds worth about Taka 1.50 crore were washed away by the flood waters.

About 150,000 people have been marooned. One hundred educational institutions were closed.

The government has sanctioned Taka 50,000 in cash, 50 metric tons of wheat as relief for the flood victims in the district.

The Daily Star correspondent, while visiting the affected areas in five thanas of the district gathered that road link between district town and other thanas headquarters were suspended due to inundation of flood water on the road.

BCD assaults Shibir activist

From CHT Correspondent RAMGARH (Khagrachhari), Aug 22: An activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir of Ramgarh Government College was assaulted and seriously injured, allegedly by the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra Dal (BCD) on Wednesday at college premises, a press-release of Chhatra Shibir said.

Abul Kashem, who is now undergoing treatment with grievous injuries at Ramgarh Health Complex was mercilessly assaulted allegedly for not joining the procession brought out by BCD activists, the press-release added.

The press-release issued by the General Secretary of Khagrachhari District unit of Chhatra Shibir, Kamrul Islam demanded exemplary punishment of the attacks.

Khagrachhari JP acting president resigns

From CHT Correspondent KHAGRACHHARI, Aug 22: Hagsaw Dhazha Chakma, the acting president of the Khagrachhari district unit of Jatiya Party has resigned from the party.

In a press statement issued by the ex-district president of the Jatiya Party said due to inability in discharging responsibilities entrusted to him by the party accompanied with personal reasons, he also resigned from even the primary membership of the party.

Hangsaw Dhazha Chakma is the convener of the liaison committee, communicating Parbatya Chattagram Jono Sanghatit Samity with the committee formed by the government for finding out a solution on Chittagong Hill Tracts problem in holding on-going talks.

DACB sues six for forgery

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 22: District Anti-Corruption Bureau (DACB) filed two cheating cases against six people with Belkuchi and Shahjadpur thanas, according to official sources, reports UNB.

In one case, one Sohrab Ali, son of Monser Ali of Teesta village under Belkuchi, was sued for forgery.

The accused forged signature of a Senior Assistant Judge and showing him as assistant teacher in Sholakura government primary school under the thana drew an amount of Tk 62,952 as his salary in different occasions.

Another case was filed by the bureau officials with Shahjadpur thana on Wednesday against five people as they submitted a false master roll without completing the assigned work.

The accused, one Dalilur Rahman, a project chairman of Keyampur union in Shahjadpur thana, in collaboration with four others allegedly misappropriated 20,414 metric tons of wheat, valued at Tk 1,49,838, sanctioned for Bonpara High School field development work.

Coaster, microbus passengers robbed

From CHT Correspondent KHAGRACHHARI, Aug 22: The passengers of three vehicles were robbed at Bhaibara in Dighinala thana of the district on Khagrachhari-Dighinala road allegedly by a group of armed tribal terrorist, victims and eye-witnesses said.

The armed tribal terrorists, stopped a passenger-carrying coaster a micro-bus and a motor-like at Bhaibara on Khagrachhari-Dighinala road. They robbed cash from the passengers at gun-point. The vehicles were scheduled for Dighinala from Khagrachhari.

Creating panic among the passengers, the armed terrorists numbering about 8 to 10 wearing black musks committed robbery and left for nearby forest, the eye-witnesses said.

Among the passengers of the micro-bus were two officials of Pamtal Forest Station of Rangamati Jhoom Control Division, the sources said.

Though, no cases were lodged with the Dighinala police in this connection, the police told this correspondent that they were aware of it, when contacted over telephone on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, in protest of continuous terrorism being stepped up by an identified and organised group of tribal terrorists on the vehicles, passengers and transport workers owners of transports suspended plying from August 19 for as indefinite period till necessary security is ensured by the authority.

Recent boat capsized in Narail

The sareng could have easily avoided the tragic accident

From Delwar Kabir

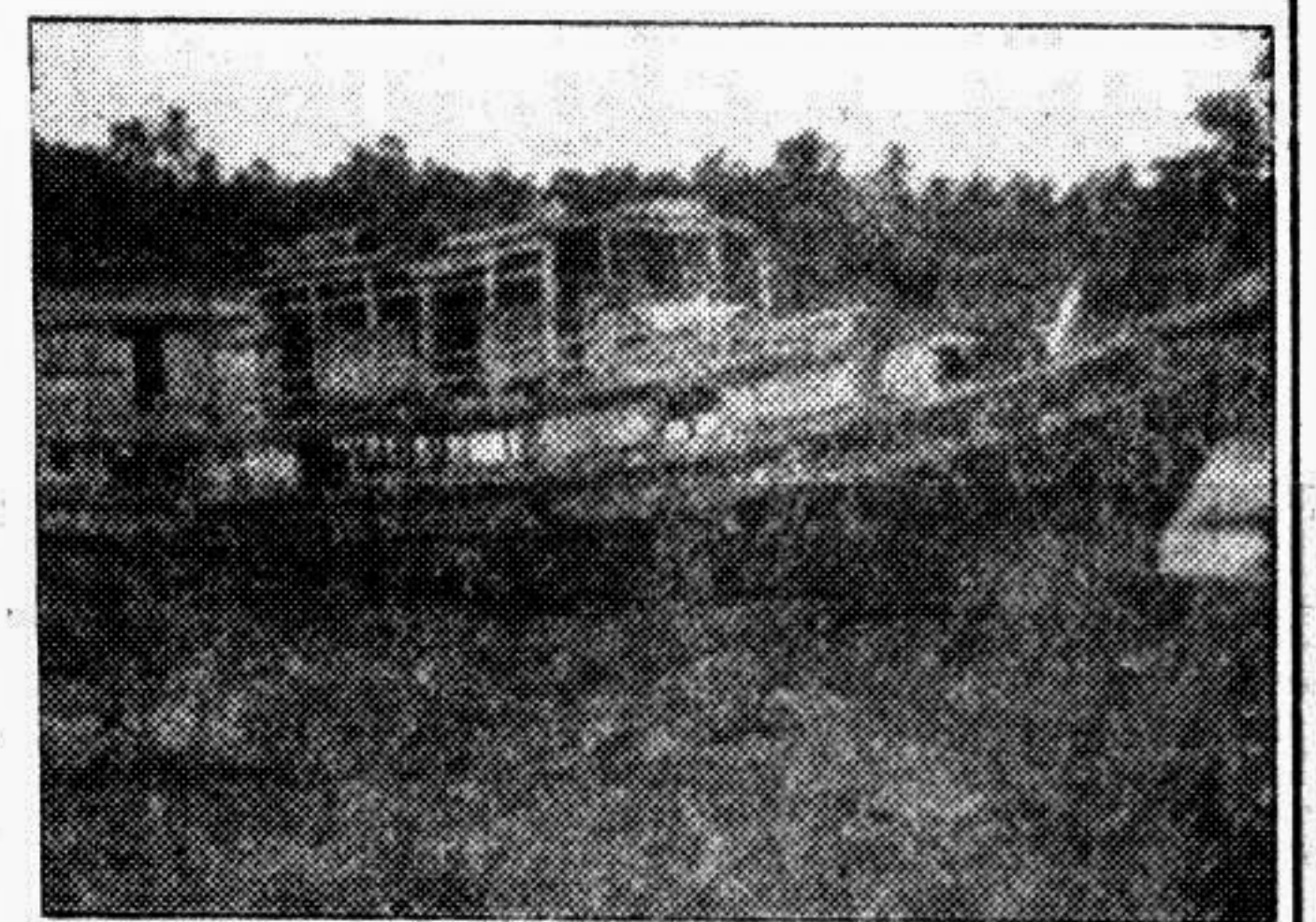
KALIA (Narail), Aug 22: Seven bodies out of eight recovered bodies of the ill-fated launch ML Basanti-I were identified.

The identified bodies are, Ruchi Khatun, 55, of Gazirhat in Dighalia thana of Khulna district, Akbar Seikh, six of Jamrildanga Mahishkhola in Kalia thana, Purnima Rani, 22, and her two sons Shyamal, five, and Shimul, two, of village Dhopakhola, Rabeya Khatun, seven, of Mirerpara and Lima Khatun, 18, a newly married woman, of village Agdia. Another body of an unknown boy age about two years was also recovered from the launch. All the bodies were covered with mud, said Taj Mohammed, Deputy Commissioner of Narail.

Talking to The Daily Star the Deputy Commissioner informed that just after hearing the news of the capsizing of August 15, he rushed to the spot and asked Jessore cantonment authorities to salvage the sunken vessel. Then Jessore cantonment authorities sent two cranes and the 'Jawans' who at last managed to recover the capsized launch and eight bodies under the water next morning.

M Majid-ul-Haque, Minister for Water Resources went to see the bodies at Narail sadar hospital on Wednesday morning and expressed deep shock at the loss of lives. The Deputy Commissioner informed that a case was filed with Kalia thana regarding the tragic incident but the owner, sareng or other staff of the launch ML Basanti is still at large.

Talking to some local people of villages Raghunathpur the site of the accident and adjacent Puriua, it was learnt that the motor launch



KALIA (Narail): The salvaged motor launch, ML Basanti is seen by the bank of river Chitra at Raghunathpur village in Kalia thana.

mainly capsized due to the negligence of the driver who was driving the launch as he was not well-trained. Further the passengers became worried when the engine of the launch stopped near Raghunathpur. Almost all the passengers boarded on the roof top as a result the launch lost its balance and at last was caught in a whirlpool in about 35 feet deep water of river Chitra, said Muktadir Mia, 70, of village Raghunathpur who was an eyewitness. Muktadir Mia informed that seeing launch caught in imbalance position he shouted at the passengers to go to the lower Deck and advised the sareng to pull the launch towards the bank. But neither the passengers nor the sareng listened to him which caused the tragic death, he believes.

Baktiar Mollah of the same village informed that the ill-fated launch was operating between Khulna and

Satrujitpur for last one month on temporary basis. Another school boy of the village Shahin, 12, told that the incident took place just at ten past ten in the morning. The local people could not rescue the ill-fated launch due to heavy current in the river.

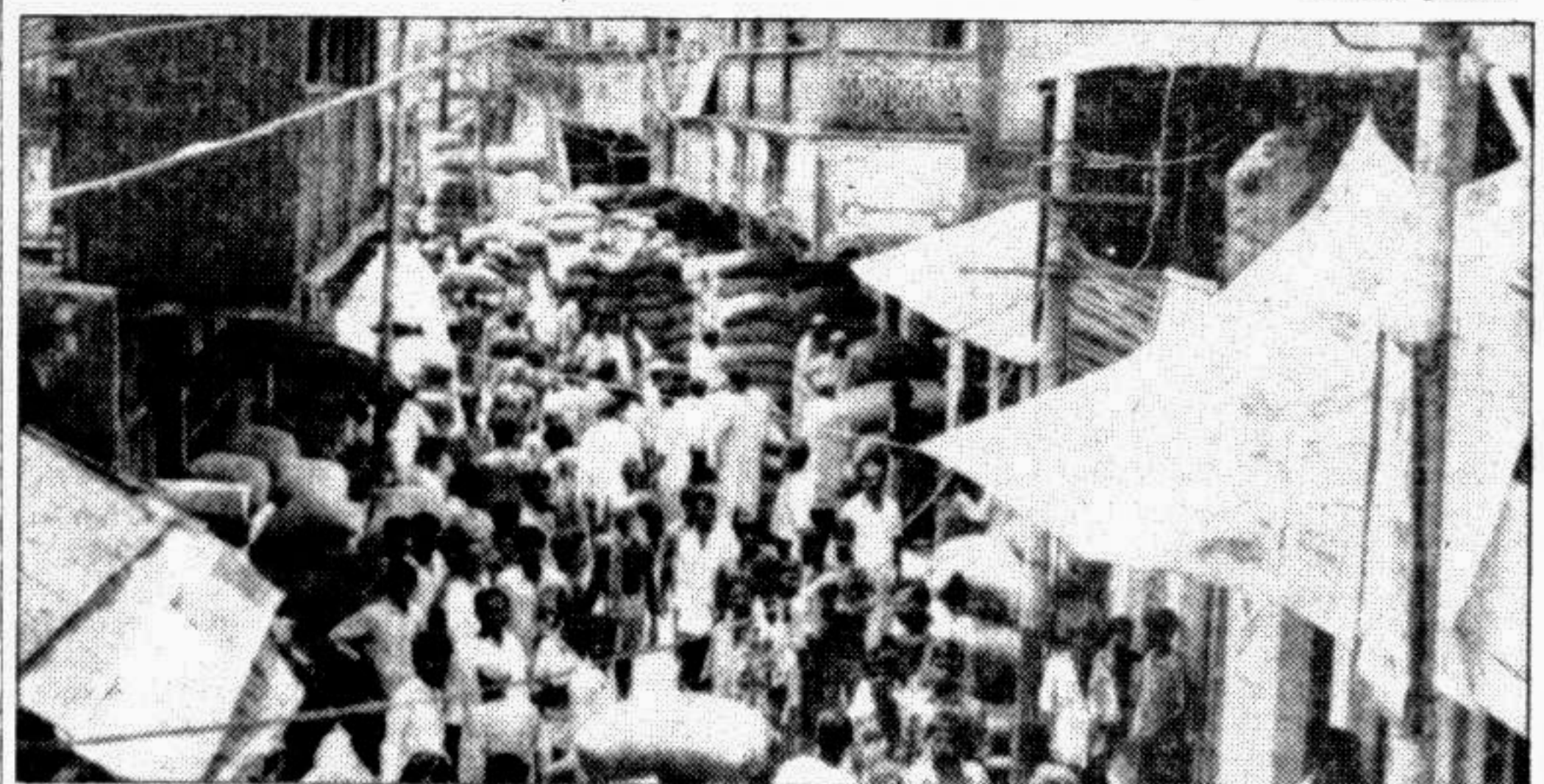
This correspondent while visiting the spot saw a book where the name of the master of the launch was written as Shahidul Islam of village Tona in Kalia thana of Narail district.

The Deputy Commissioner, Taj Mohammed further informed that he came to know the name of the boat owner as Subash Chandra Dhal who was at large. Local people also informed that the number of missing passengers would not go high as most of the passengers were boarding on the top of the launch and they managed to escape as it took place during day time.

Meghna again turns furious



Meghna, Dakatia freshly attacked Puran Bazar business centre in Chandpur town.



When the Meghna was devouring a large part of the Puran Bazar area in Chandpur town, businessmen hurriedly removed their goods and kept them at whatever places they availed including roads.

RDD earns Tk 12 cr in last FY

System loss reduced to 18.31 pc in 1994-95 against 41 pc in '92-'93

From CHT Correspondent

RANGAMATI, Aug 22: The Rangamati Distribution Division (RDD)-II of Power Development Board (PDB) has earned Taka 12.93 crore as electricity revenue in 1994-95 against supply of electricity to some 13,373 consumers within its network of supply covering an area of about 18,000 square kilometres, officials said.

Due to constant vigilance of 178 staff and officials of RDD, the system loss in the perimeter of its supply network has been reduced to 18.31 per cent in 1994-95 which was 41 per cent in 1992-93, said Wasir Rahman, the Executive Engineer of RDD-II, claiming it as the lowest rate of system loss in the country. The international rate of system loss is 15 per cent, he added.

Despite ceaseless drive towards realisation, an amount of Tk 5.84 crore has been lying outstanding against government and non-government agencies including the consumers in public

sector till June 30, 1995. According to sources, out of the outstanding amount of Tk 2.71 crore lying with government and semi-government agencies, an amount of Tk 60 lakh and Tk six lakh are lying unpaid against Rangamati and Khagrachhari Public Health Engineering Department respectively whereas Rangamati and Khagrachhari municipality authorities have been avoiding payment of electricity revenue to a sum of Tk 24 lakh and Tk nine lakh respectively.

A case is under trial for realisation of an amount of Tk five lakh against Rangamati Hatchery Complex, the fate of which is uncertain, sources said.

An amount of Tk 1.40 crore has also been lying outstanding against the government employees who have consumed electricity in the officially allotted residences whereas a sum of Tk 2.40 crore has been lying unpaid against the members of pub-

lic sectors who have consumed electricity either domestically or commercially till June 30, sources added.

Besides supply of electricity to Rural Electrification Board at Hathazari of Chittagong at the rate of Tk 11 lakh monthly, RDD has got more 10 electric supply units in the two hill districts of Rangamati and Khagrachhari including a considerable area in Rangunia and Raajan thanas of Chittagong district. The regular electric supply units headed by Resident Engineers are working independently under the administrative control of RDD-II at Kaptai, Rangamati, Khagrachhari, Manikchhari, Matiranga, Betunia, Dighinala, Marishya, Mohalchhari and Ranghar, sources said.

The RDD's special squad disconnected about 4,000 power lines of the consumers for non-payment of electricity revenue timely including 400 in the month of June, 1995 alone, sources added.

4 kg tumour removed

PATUAKHALI, Aug 22: A four-kg tumour was removed from the stomach of a three-year-old baby at sadar general hospital, hospital officials said on Saturday, reports UNB.

Dr Habibur Rahman, Consultant of Surgery Department after necessary examination arranged the operation of Abu Siddique, son of a farmer of Bara-Bighai and the huge tumour was removed on August 8 from his kidney successfully.

The sources said, the patient who had been suffering for a long time was admitted to the hospital recently.

Indian national held with smuggled goods

From CHT Correspondent RAMGARH (Khagrachhari), Aug 22: The Bangladesh Rifles stationed here has so far rounded up an Indian national with three Bangladeshis allegedly for smuggling Indian goods into Bangladesh territory and recovered different Indian goods worth over Taka three lakh in separate raids within a month.

Launch dacoits chased, caught

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 22: Twelve armed dacoits while fleeing after committing a launch dacoity in broad day light were caught by the villagers on Saturday. About 40 passengers were injured in the attack. The villagers recovered two pipeguns, wife daggers one ram dao 4 cartridges and some of the booty

from the fleeing dacoits. The passenger launch MV Arman was on its way to Ajmiriganj having started from Sherpur ghat of Moulvibazar district in the morning. At about 11-45, when the launch reached near Fadullah of Nabiganj thana, some dacoits who were in disguise of passen-

gers in the launch swooped on the launch crews and some passengers. The dacoits looted valuables worth about Taka two lakh from the passengers. Some other accomplices on an engine boat also joined the dacoits in the launch. In the meantime, the clerk of the launch dived into the river and swam to the bank. The villagers soon gathered there as he made a hue and cry. One Aftab Uddin with his licensed gun boarded on a speed boat and chased the dacoits on the engine boat who were fleeing along with the booty, through a canal. After sometime the dacoits reached near the Raniganj bazar of Jagannathpur thana of Sunamganj district where they found no way to proceed due to a bamboo made bridge. The dacoits then opened fire at the chasers.

There was an exchange of several rounds of blank fires. At a stage the villagers also surrounded the engine boat of the dacoits. They caught as many as 12 out of 16 dacoits of the gang. One getting information, police from the Jagannathpur thana reached there and arrested the dacoits.



A HERO OF OUR TIME: Aftabuddin (Marked with X) armed with his shotgun led a group of villagers in search of the launch dacoits (seen sitting in front) who had earlier taken control of a passenger launch in the river Kushiya. The posse succeeded in capturing the dacoits after they were cornered in a canal.

— Star photo