

# Unfavourable weather conditions affecting tilling in vast areas

From Ranesh Maitra

**PABNA, Nov 8:** Adoption of modern methods of cultivation and its quick expansion are the preconditions of agriculture development in the agricultural sector — specially in Pabna district where agriculture was still lagging far behind so far as its scientific development is concerned.

While talking to this correspondent, a highly experienced agricultural expert with wide knowledge of vast range in the field, research and management gave the above views.

It was suggested that as the area of land would no more increase, scientific measures like the introduction of new and improved varieties of crops like those BRRI, BARI etc should develop keeping in view of climatic, soil and other peculiarities, abandoning cultivation of traditional crops with poor productivity, maximising acreage of potato, maize etc, increasing soil fertility by reverting to maximum use of green manures but through modern and planned methods, introduction of minor cash crops etc and by taking all possible measures for aggressive expansion of irrigation facilities.

When contacted, Wasuz-zaman Akhanda, Deputy Director, Agriculture Extension Department of the district gave a concrete picture of Pabna district relating to the agriculture sector.

The total area of the district is 2,36,566 hectares with a total population in the nine thanas being 21,19,108. There are 71 unions, three pourashabhas with 188 agricultural blocks in 1657 villages.

The total number of the farmers stand at 2,25,130

with a total area of cultivable land of 1,191,915 hectares. Out of this total area of cultivable land, 28,495 hectares come under single crop, 1,25,520 hectares under double crop and remaining 37,895 hectares fall under the purview of three-crop areas. Of the total cultivable land, only 39.44 per cent has



**PABNA:** An old farmer of Sujanagar thana helplessly looking at his land yet to be fit for cultivation. He was affected by water logging.

—Star photo  
so far been brought under irrigation net-work. The total area under crop cultivation has been estimated as 3,93,220 hectares of land — with a production intensity of 205 per cent. The total area of fallow land in the district stands at 235 hectares, he said.

The farmers' families have again been sub-divided as: landless — 30,520 families, marginal peasants — 74,535 families, small peasants — 60,750 families, middle class peasants — 46,525 families and marginal peasants — 12,800 families.

It has also been gathered that out of the total area of cultivable land in Pabna district, 16,757 hectares have been covered under 639 deep tube-wells, 35,501

hectares under 7,049 shallow tube-wells. 1,564 hectares under 201 power pumps, 74 hectares under hand tube-wells and 438 hectares under 523 other pumps.

It was further gathered from various sources that due to lack of surface water during the ban period, most of the power pumps become ineffective for the purpose of irrigation and hence over 1,500 hectares of land earmarked for irrigating through this sort of pumps remain almost unirrigated. Besides, about 10 per cent of other varieties of irrigation pumps or tubewells of different brands also remain unserviceable throughout the year on an average.

Another alarming feature in irrigation sector is that underground water-level, due to adverse effects of Farakka Barrage, climatic changes, alarming decrease in the rainfall and, in some cases due to unscientific way of sinking of tubewells, irrigation has been considerably difficult. According to the survey report, the underground level fell upto 60 per cent from 39 per cent.

Under-ground water-level needs to be conducted again in this district — since during over 30 years, no such survey was undertaken although during the above period, the district has been faced with severe constraints of nature and resultant uncertainty in the agriculture sector.

The cropping and cultivation pattern in the district of Pabna and also in the other flood affected districts needed a thorough change or emphasis. Despite all sorts of uncertainties faced by the farmers, October to April months could be considered safer season during which

rabi crops could be cultivated in a massive scale. For this purpose, the most important pre-requisite was the adoption of wide-spread irrigation network since the season in question puts the district and also the surrounding districts of the north and south into extreme shortage of underground water level with fur-



**PABNA:** Farmers carrying seeds for cultivation under Agriculture Rehabilitation Programme after the recent flood in an affected area in Bhangoora thana. — Star photo

the disadvantage of lack of surface water too. According to official statistics over 60 per cent of the total cultivable area within Pabna district could not as yet be brought under irrigation facilities.

Hence, no delay in extending irrigation facilities should be made, an expert emphasised.

When contacted, an official of the Agriculture Extension Department of Pabna

said that during the current season High Yielding Variety (HYV) IRRI-Boro would be cultivated in 38,880 hectares and local variety in 2,620 hectares of land with a total production target of 1,39,850 tons of the said variety of paddy during the current season. HYV mustard seeds would be cultivated on

production target of 1,095 tons; 2,441 hectares under the cultivation of mung with a production target of 2148 tons; 27,984 acres under the cultivation of khesari with a production target of 26,305 tons; 6,780 hectares under the cultivation of 6,780 hectares with a production target of 4,407 tons, 18

these October-November months when normally sun is found to shine throughout the day.

This unfavourable weather condition is seriously affecting land tilling and sowing of vegetables, pulses, oilseeds etc.

So, it is too early to say whether a good harvest and fulfilment of the target of crop production, as noted above, would ultimately be possible to achieve.

An official of the Agriculture Extension Department, Pabna, showed a comparative study of the food production situation and claimed that despite many odds remarkable progresses were made braving so many adverse situations like constraints of nature, high prices of fertilisers and their occasional scarcity, exorbitant rates of pesticides, insufficient facilities for irrigation, now availability of high-yielding seeds.

A comparative study of the population, food production, food requirement and resultant deficiency or sufficiency in Pabna district, traditionally known to be a food-deficit district is given below:

**1985-86:** Population 15,28,146; food production 2,51,627 tons, food requirement -2,42,632 tons, surplus being 8,995 tons.

**1986-87:** Population 15,99,248; food production 2,74,182 tons; requirement -2,53,920 tons; surplus production rose to 20,262 tons.

**1987-88:** Population 15,99,248; food production 2,74,182 tons; requirement -2,53,920 tons; surplus production rose to 20,262 tons.

**1988-89:** Population 16,36,031; produced food -2,57,404 tons; requirement -2,59,761 tons; deficit stood at 2357 tons.

**1989-90:** Population 16,46,959; food production 3,00,775 tons; requirement -2,61,496 tons and surplus rose to 39,279 tons.

**1990-91:** Population 16,73,659; produced food 3,18,479; requirement of food -2,65,735 tons; surplus rose to the tune of 52,744 tons.

**1991-92:** Population 17,65,085; produced food -3,53,353 tons, food requirement -2,80,251 tons and hence surplus rose to 73,102 tons.

**1992-93:** Population 18,05,681; food produced -3,38,640 tons; food requirement -2,86,697 and surplus went down to 51,943 tons.

**1993-94:** Population 18,45,407; food produced 3,00,874 tons; requirement of food -2,93,004 tons and surplus went further down to 7,870 tons.

**1994-95:** Population rose to a total of 18,86,006; food produced 3,33,462; requirement of food -2,99,450 and hence the production surplus rose to 34,012 tons.

It may be recalled here in this connection that the population shown in the above statistic annually does not mean actual population. It means 'food consumable population' i.e. the babies are excluded from the actual population, similarly 'produced food' also means rice, not paddy and atta, not wheat. Thus production of food grains is naturally higher than actual consumable food mentioned above.

Although the official figure noted above gives a very optimistic view, the unofficial sources, however, do not agree. They claim that Pabna district was still running deficit at least by 30,000 to 50,000 tons every year.

## Metropolitan

### Egyptian Envoy meets Shamsul

Ambassador of Egypt in Bangladesh Ossama Mohammed Tawfik called on Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam at his secretariat office yesterday, reports UNB.

During the discussion, they exchanged views on issues of mutual interest, particularly strengthening the existing trade relation between the two countries.

### POP for dialogues in resolving political impasse

The Peshajibi Oykiko Parishad (POP) yesterday called for resolving the current political impasse through dialogues. The Oykiko Parishad expressed deep concern over the current political situation and said immediate solution to the issue is necessary in the greater national interest, reports BSS.

The Oykiko Parishad said the economy of the country had been suffering due to hartals, strikes and blockades.

Terrorism has been appearing in towns and villages while the terrorists have taken over the educational institutions, it pointed out.

The organisation will hold a national rally of professionals and discussion at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium today at 3 pm which will be presided over by Azizul Haq.

### JU to retain existing admission rules

By JU Correspondent

Jahangirnagar University (JU) will go by its own admission test procedure despite the Education Ministry decision to annual the admission test system in the universities, official sources said.

JU General Admission Committee, at a meeting held on October 31, discussed the issue of taking admission tests to enrol students in the first year honours classes, and resolved that the system should continue.

At present, JU enrolls students through a written test of 100 marks and a viva voce heaving no score.

The admission committee meeting chaired by JU VC Prof. Amirul Islam Chowdhury also expressed the need to revamp and update the present admission procedure. No final decision, however, was made in this regard, but several changes in the type of question papers are likely to take place, sources said.

Sources hinted that the qualification for seeking admission might be upgraded, and a select number of students might be allowed to sit for the admission test to avert the increasing rush and for the smooth functioning of the admission tests.

The meeting also urged for early start of the admission procedure.

**Academic calendar**  
Meanwhile Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities

are planning to introduce an academic calendar for the smooth functioning of the academic activities and to end session jams.

"A draft of the proposed calendar has already been prepared, but it is yet to be finalised," said the JU Deputy Registrar for Education, Abul Gafor. "The calendar will include all examination schedules and other academic activities," he added.

The proposed academic calendar is expected to be introduced from next year, after discussions with the deans and chairpersons of the departments and faculties.

Once reputed as the session-jam-free university, the JU is now 18 months behind its academic schedule.

### DU Statistics Dept freshers' reception held

The Freshers' Reception '95 of Dhaka University (DU) Statistics department was held yesterday, says a press release.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed and Dean of the Science Faculty Prof. Shafi Chowdhury attended the function as chief and special guest, respectively. Chairman of the department, Prof. Kalipad Shan presided.

The programme ended with a cultural function.

### 'DC-10 flight to CTG feasible'

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday operated its first DC-10 flight to Chittagong as a prelude to regular operations with wide-bodied aircraft, reports BSS.

This "test flight" left Dhaka at 11:30 in the morning and returned from Chittagong in the afternoon.

The Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah al-Noman and Chittagong district administration officials were present at the Chittagong airport when the DC-10 landed.

Later, the minister talked to the local newsmen regarding wide-bodied aircraft operations to Chittagong.

Senior officials of Biman and Civil Aviation Authority onboard the test flight to determine future wide-bodied aircraft operations to Chittagong, have opined that it was feasible to operate such aircraft to Chittagong.

### Jungle Book on BTV

A new cartoon serial 'Jungle Book' based on the famous story by Rudyard Kipling will be aired on BTV from December 10, says a press release.

The 30-minute cartoon, dubbed in Bangla, will be telecast on every Friday at 11:45 am, added the press release.

### Newsman ill

Zahiduzzaman Farooq, senior reporter of the Daily Ittefaq and Bangladesh correspondent to Japanese news agency, Kyodo, has been hospitalised with serious ailments, a family source said, reports BSS.

Farooq was admitted to Monowara Hospital on Monday in an unconscious condition. His ailment is yet to be diagnosed.

### Book on Bangladesh's development

Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam yesterday urged the economists and experts to give practical suggestions and way out alongside theoretical analysis while conducting studies, reports BSS.

The minister also called upon them to take into account different socio-political issues and natural calamities during the economic studies.

Islam made this call while addressing the publication ceremony of "Experiences with Economic Reform: A Review of Bangladesh's Development 1995" by Centre for Policy Dialogue.

A number of political leaders including Abdu Samad Azad, economists, journalists and former bureaucrats took part in the discussion while Prof. Rehman Sobhan presided.

Some 16 experts reviewed different issues of national economy including recent macro-economic developments.

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### JCD rally renews call for govt-opposition talks

By DU Correspondent

The ruling party leaders reiterated their call upon the mainstream opposition parties to sit across the table for a peaceful solution to the on-going political stalemate.

They were speaking at a rally on the Dhaka University campus organised by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal to protest the opposition-called hartals.

Addressing the rally as chief guest, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr. Khandakar Mossarraf Hossain said, "The 12th amendment of the Constitution says, the Prime Minister will always be a parliament member; so the opposition's demand for a neutral caretaker government is unconstitutional."

The rally was addressed, among others, by Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia, DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman, JCD president Fazlul Haq Milan, JCD joint secretary Shahiduzzaman Chowdhury Anney, Reza Pahlabi Masum, DU unit vice president Nasir Uddin Ahmad, DU hall and city unit leaders of JCD.

Rafiq, referring to Hasina's proposal to appoint the Chief Justice as the head of the caretaker government, said, the CJ is to protect, preserve and defend the Constitution. He cannot be the head of a caretaker administration, which, he says, violates the Constitution.

Tariqul Islam said, "Pre-conditions should not be

placed before the discussion." Amanullah Aman said, the people of Bangladesh would not observe hartal or any other destructive programme in future.

Fazlul Haq Milan said, the students should remain alert regarding the opposition programmes.

President of DU unit of JCD presided the rally.

UNB adds: Earlier, the students, from different residential halls of the university brought out a procession on the campus and chanted anti-hartal slogans.

### Body recovered

By DMCH Correspondent

Police recovered the body of an unidentified young man from a canal at Meracha in the city Monday.

Police suspected that the young man drowned in the canal, in the morning.

Two sisters, Doll, 5, and Poly, 6, and another — Tania, 8, were injured when a cocktail burst while they were playing in a slum near Lalbagh Keller Mor yesterday. The cocktail was thrown there from outside, slum dwellers told police. They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College hospital.

A teenaged girl, Farida 19 reportedly committed suicide by taking poison at her residence at Mirerpar under Amtola thana of Tongi Sunday night.

## Weather

### Light rain likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Barisal, Khulna and Chittagong divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office says light rain may occur at one or two places over Dhaka division during the period.

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere across the country.

Night temperature may rise by 1-3 degrees Celsius over the country.

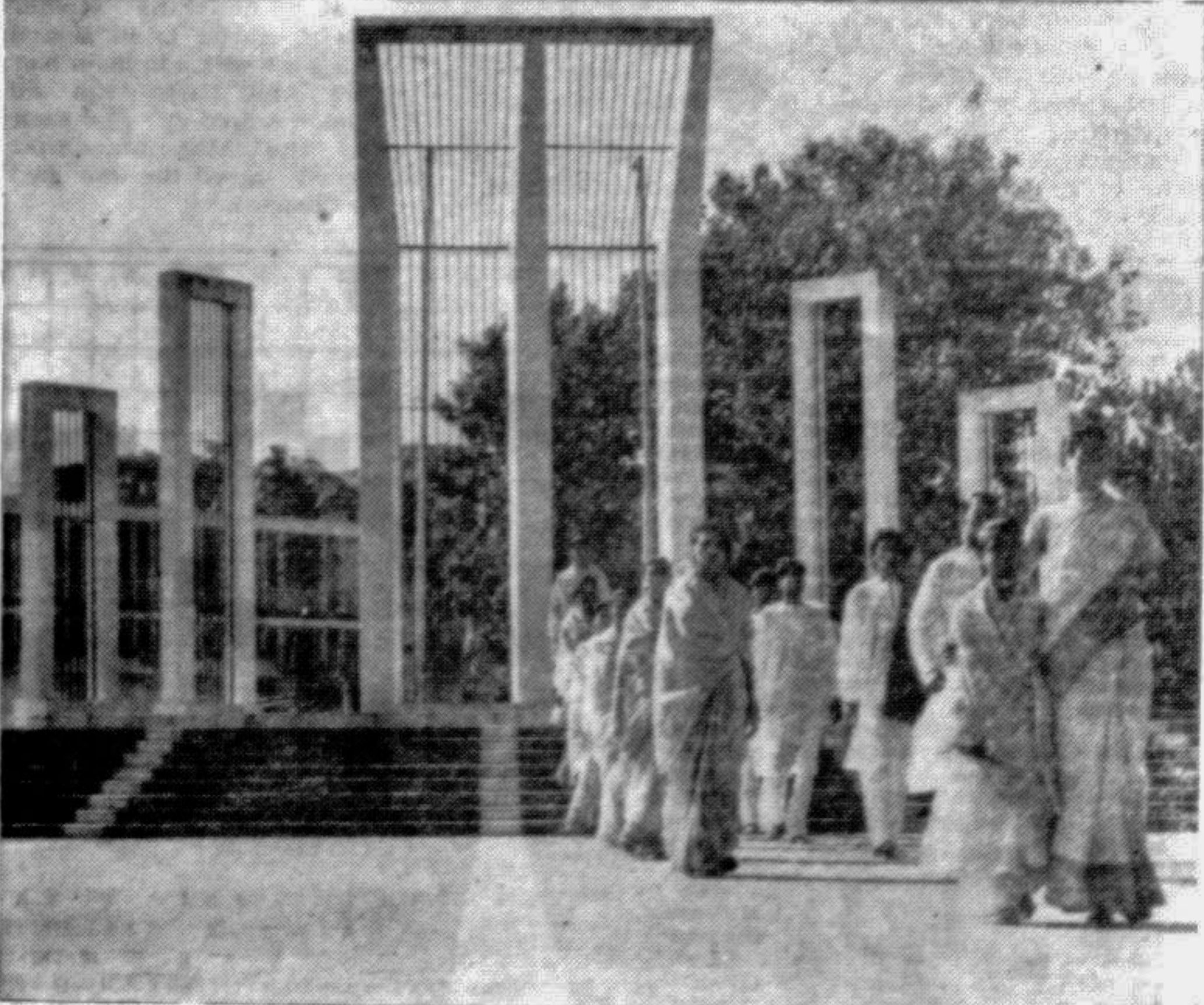
In its outlook for subsequent two days Met Office predicted that weather is likely to deteriorate. Giving an extended outlook for another five days weathermen predicted little change.

The country's highest temperature 35.5 degrees Celsius was recorded at Chittagong and the lowest 35.5 degrees Celsius was recorded at Chittagong and the lowest 17.6 degrees at Dinajpur.

The sun sets today at 5:15 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:10 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.4	21.2	62	75
Chittagong	35.5	24.3	89	76
Rajshahi	32.1	20.2	89	93
Khulna	34.0	21.9	83	83
Barisal	32.4	22.0	88	93
Sylhet	33.0	21.3	63	74
Cox's Bazar	34.5	25.5	78	84



Bangladesh's international model Bibi Russel, along with her troupe, during a filming session of *Jibaner Charka*, a saga centring on weavers' community, on the early morning of Tuesday at the Central Shaheed Minar. This BTV package programme, a production of Robella, is scheduled to be televised on the occasion of the 25-year celebration of country's independence. — Star photo