

# Thousands of peasants economically crippled as Baral was 'killed'

From Our Correspondent



PABNA: The Baral river. An embankment constructed right through the river cut off water flow of the river. — Star photo

PABNA, Aug 25: The river Baral flowing through the thana headquarters of Chatmohar has been virtually turned into several closed canals by artificially creating cross-bunds over the river.

Thousands of peasants living on both sides of the river, engaged for centuries in cultivating thousands of acres of land through irrigation with adequate surface water then available from the river. Neither can afford costly irrigation methods, nor can they have supply of irrigation water from the river which became virtually dead.

Abdul Malek, chairman, Chatmohar union parishad, and secretary, thana Awami League, said that he, along with others, protested implementing the scheme both in the upazila parishad and also outside.

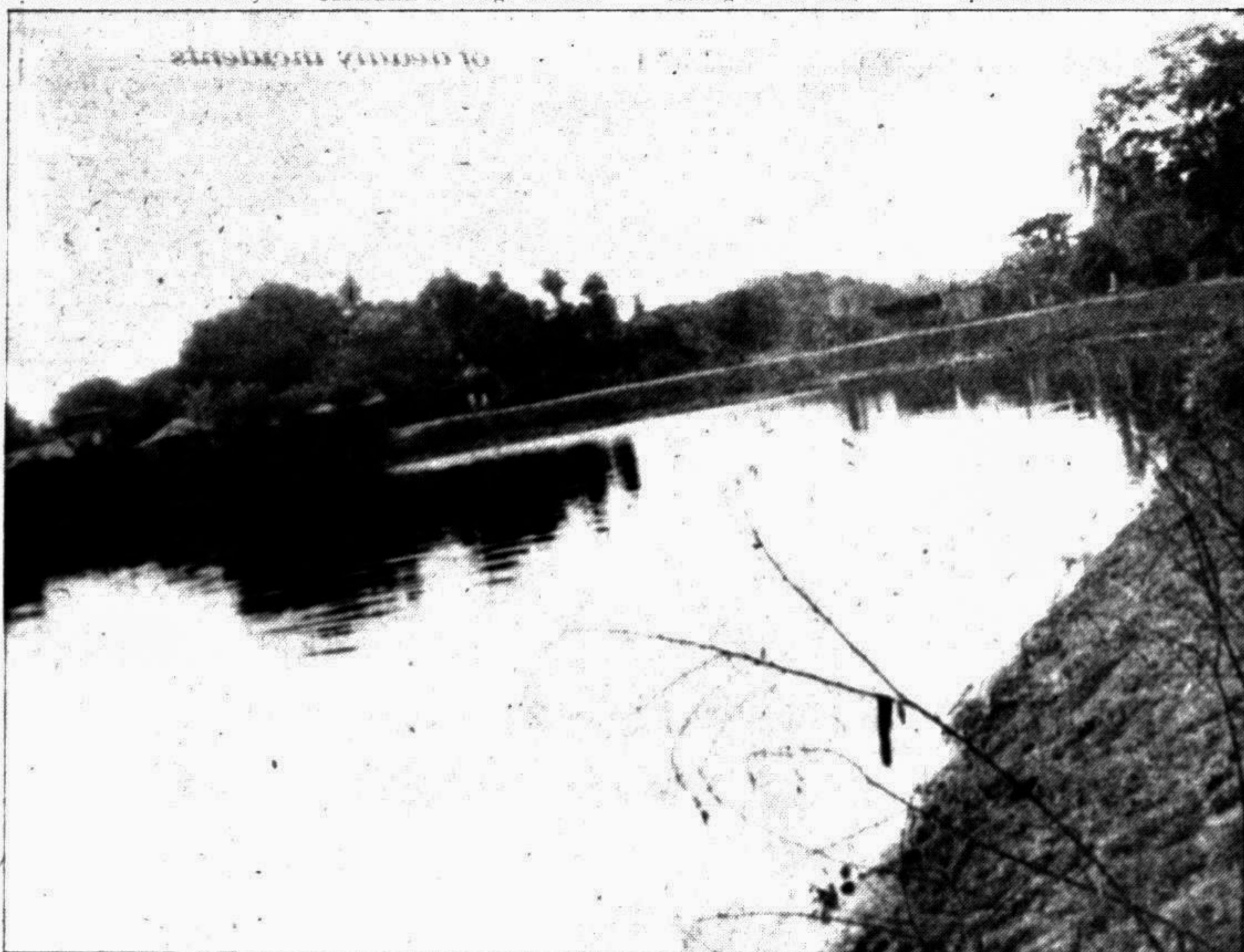
Other items like cloth, kerosene, spices arrived here through river routes indicating good business.

All these mischief were done allegedly during the then upazila chairman who, under cover of development of pisciculture, constructed as many as

Talking to this correspondent Saiful Islam, a young energetic social worker of Jabarkole, a village situated

They organised a mass movement against the scheme which, it is now evident, has crippled the traditional economy of Chatmohar thana.

The chairman, however, stated that worst suffering has been caused to the peasants since irrigation, which was not at all a problem to them due to the existence of the river, posed a severe threat.



PABNA: A partial view of a cross-dam-cum-road constructed on the river Baral. Once people of the area traded goods shipping them through river routes but as the communication was disrupted trade in the area sharply fell giving rise to unemployment. — Star photo

four bundhs at very short distances between one another over the said river Mara Baral defying strong public resentment against the implementation of the scheme. Mass demonstrations were also staged when the bundhs were being constructed.

People could easily cross the river and meet their needs of communication on the one hand and also the river could be saved and all the benefits that were available to the people from the river would also remain intact. But, he said, although this view was found to receive an almost unanimous support from sections of the

the UP chairman said that due to the damage thus caused to the river Baral, at least 5000 boatmen and potters became jobless, boats have completely disappeared from a vast area, river communication has vanished.

chant claimed that fish cultivation also suffered enormously as there was no normal flow of water and as such the declared objective of development of fisheries could not be materialised.

It was, during those days, widely alleged that hundreds of tons of wheat and also cash money allotted from the government in the name of implementation of several gigantic fisheries projects, were also grabbed to meet the personal ends of some known touts.

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Although river communication was the main means of communication in Chatmohar thana as the area fell under the famous Chalan Beel area.

The fish merchant said that more quantity of fish was available when the river had its normal flow but after construction of bundhs, fish production virtually declined.

However, the river 'Mara Baral' (dead Baral), which is a tributary of the main Baral

just on the opposite bank of the river, said that the construction of the said bundhs have caused only one benefit. They could now cross the river using rickshaw, rickshaw-van, bi-cycles instead of boats but this benefit could have very well been achieved just by constructing two bridges.

When asked, a police officer, preferring anonymity told this correspondent that the bundhs have rather created law and order problems as the peasants very often dismantle the bundhs for getting water for irrigation.

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## 948 schemes implemented during last fiscal year

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Aug 25: A total of 948 schemes were implemented under Test Relief and Food for Works Programme during the last financial year in four thanas of Chuadanga district.

Of the total 844 schemes implemented under Test Relief Programme at a total expenditure of 2,437 metric ton of wheat while 104 schemes were implemented under Food for Works Programme at an estimated cost of 1,999 metric tons of wheat.

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133 schemes in Damurhuda thana and 96 schemes in Jibannagar thana.

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menting the schemes. Of the total 844 schemes were implemented under Test Relief Programme at a total expenditure of 2,437 metric ton of wheat while 104 schemes were implemented under Food for Works Programme at an estimated cost of 1,999 metric tons of wheat.

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## 50 pc youths addicted

PATUAKHALI, Aug 25: Number of drug addicted people has been increasing alarmingly at Bauphal thana in the district, reports UNB.

Local people said, at least 50 per cent youths of the thana are addicted to different kinds of drugs.

According to them, drugs like ganja, wine, phensedyl, spirit and sugar-mixed cigarettes are available in different areas of the thana and are being sold openly.

A number of drug-stores of the area are selling spurious drugs and banned medicines with the cooperation of the law enforcing agencies, guardians alleged.

It was alleged that certain quarters are using these addicted people for achieving their narrow interest. They allegedly supply money and drugs to them.

## Accused escapes from court

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 25: An accused in a mugging case escaped from police custody at the District Judge court here today.

According to police, Suman, 22, fled while he was being brought to jail after hearing at the court.

# Faridpur Medical College faces numerous problems

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Aug 25: Faridpur Medical College Hospital is facing numerous problems causing inconveniences to the patients as well as students.

The fate of the students of this Medical College is hanging in balance. Their studies are being greatly hampered in absence of teachers. Besides, there is no laboratory. Hostel accommodation is not sufficient either. Separate girl students hostel and transport facility is badly needed.

For the students to attend their practical classes at the 250-bed hospital situated at Harukandi, three kilometres from the medical college in the town where theoretical classes are held, Third and fourth year students are very much concerned about their fates as they find no scope to do laboratory work.

Recently the students went on a strike demanding immediate solution to the problems to ensure the building of their career as good doctors. The students called off their strike on assurances of the present government to fulfill their demands on emergency basis. By raising it to 500-bed hospital

which is the least requirement for a full-pledged Medical College Hospital here.

On the other hand, the superintendent of Faridpur Medical College Hospital when contacted told this correspondent that 250 employees including doctors are not getting their salaries for the last three months.

They are facing acute financial hardship. It is learnt that patients requiring operation are often refused admission to this hospital for a long time because of the lack of oxygen and other appliances. Besides ECG and ultra sonogram machines have been lying inoperative for want of necessary appliances. All the patients have to be operated upon by doctors of the hospital at different clinics in the town at a very high cost.

Moreover, the employees including doctors have no residential accommodation in and around the campus. They are to rent residential houses at their own initiatives in the town, three kilometers away from the medical college hospital.

hospital it is lying inoperative in the store for want of necessary fund. As a result whenever electricity goes, the whole campus plunges into the dark creating an infernal situation in the campus.

Though all the buildings of the hospital are recently built during the last government rule at the cost of Taka 14 crore, cracks have already been developed on walls and roofs of the buildings letting rain water to ooze in.

Moreover, the hospital campus goes under water following slight rainfall as there is no drainage system.

A cold war allegedly between the authorities of Faridpur Medical College and 250-bed hospital is prevailing ever since its inception over the question of authority of either principal of Medical College or Superintendent of 250-bed hospital.

The concerned authority is urged upon to look into the matter and take necessary measures to remove all the problems to create a congenial atmosphere for the students to prosecute their studies as well as the patients to get opportunity for proper treatment.

# Pabna Project — bane or boon?

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Aug 25: The farmers within 12 thanas under Pabna Project areas — officially known as Pabna Irrigation and Rural Development Project areas — have been faced with three types of acute problems — flooding, water-logging and crisis of water caused by inadequate rainfall and shortage water.

This has been posing a threat to cultivation of land in vast areas which might lead to a shortfall in the target of agricultural production.

In an interview with this correspondent, some officials

vast areas outside the flood control embankment. Besides, standing crops on 4,000 acres have been damaged due to water-logging.

Jute plants cannot be washed in many other areas due to scarcity of water caused by extremely inadequate rainfall sometimes.

The agricultural specialists said that vast areas of land lying outside the flood control embankment areas in Bera, Sujanagar, Pabna Sadar and Ishurdi thanas have been faced

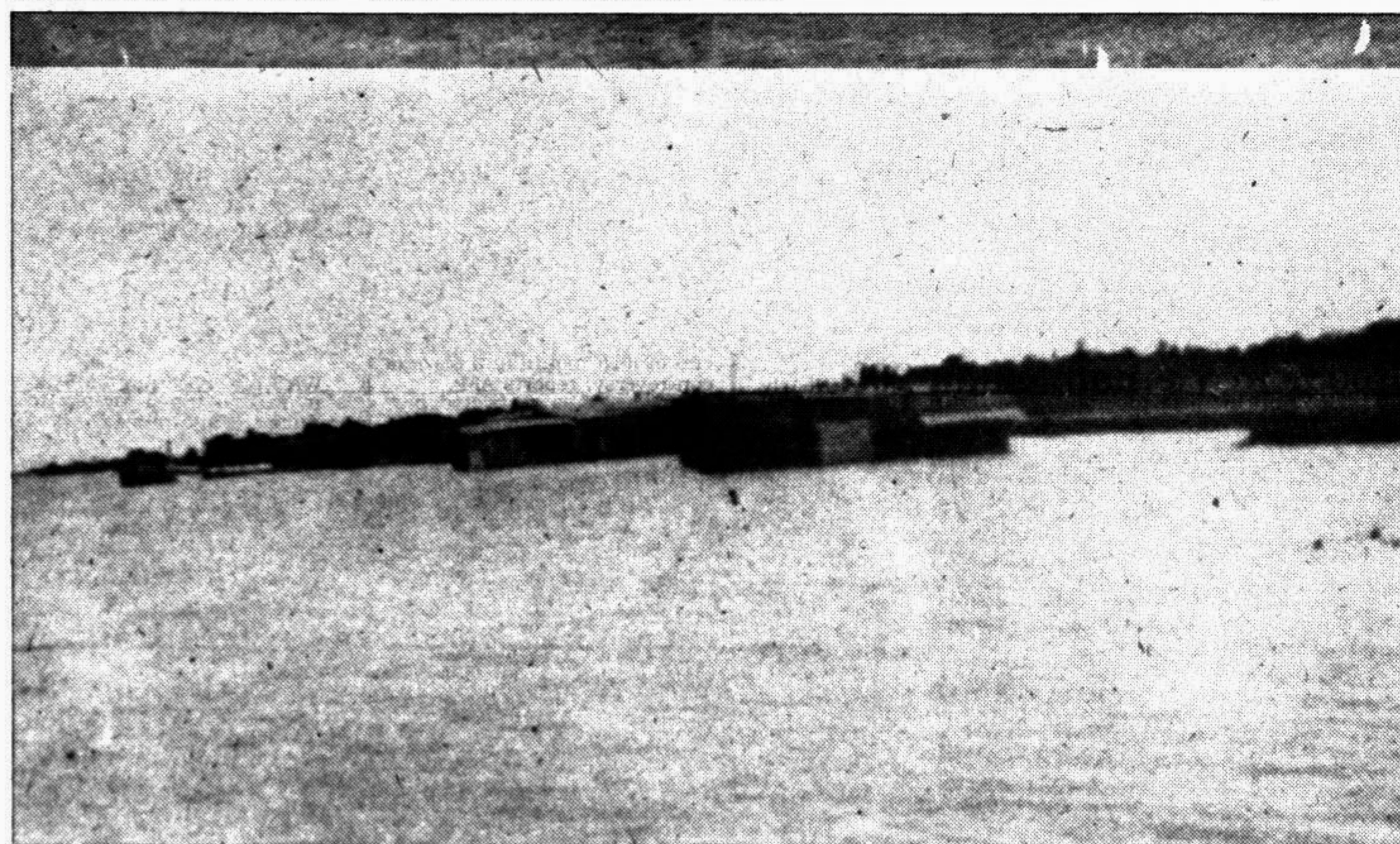
quite different problems caused by water-logging. This is also phenomenon standing on the way of the development of agricultural production.

As there is no drainage and no outlet for the blocked water to be drained out, or at least the excess portion of the said water was thus removed from vast low-lying areas, proper growth of crops and tilling of land for cultivation were both being hampered. Over 3,000 areas of land in these areas were left unused as tilling could not be possible.

these lands were quite impossible.

Due to the other phenomenon that has developed due to acute scarcity of rainfall, a dire need of irrigation has become evident but at least 60 per cent areas of cultivable land was yet to be brought under the irrigation network.

Meanwhile, in the vast areas around the famous Ghughudaha Beel within Santhia thana, Beel Gandahasti under the Sujanagar thana and the famous Chalan Beel areas under Chatmohar and Bhangora thanas



PABNA: A village went under water due to sudden flash flood in river Atrai. — Star photo

of the Agriculture Department expressed the apprehension. The flood control embankments constructed on the west bank of the river Jamuna and on the northern bank of the river Padma, have saved Pabna district considerably from flood inundation but in turn created some other problems too informed the source.

In Bera thana, crops have been damaged in about 6,000 acres of land of eight unions due to flood inundation covering

with the inevitability of flood inundation and the resultant crop damages every year. This year, the floods came earlier than usually expected period which caused severe damages to standing aus and aman paddy.

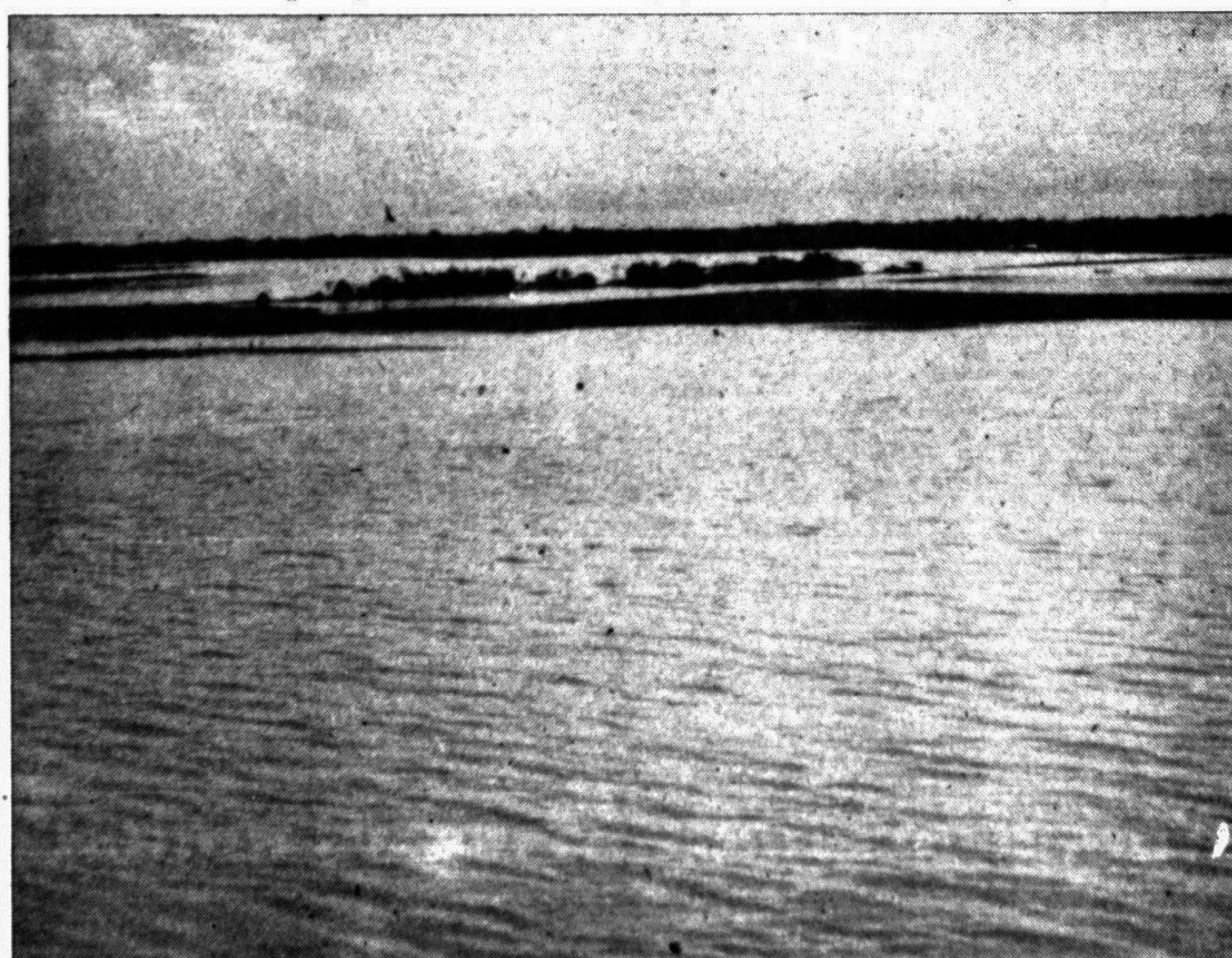
The same experts further added that vast areas within the embankment areas of Santhia, Sujanagar, Pabna Sadar, Bhangora Chatmohar, Faridpur, Lalpur and Baraigram thana areas under the Pabna Project have been faced with

A large area of land with vegetables are still remaining under water. The vegetables have been completely destroyed.

Due to water-logging, in another area of 4,000 acres meant for the cultivation of Ropa Aman and 2,000 areas of land amount for the cultivation of Ropa Aman and 2,000 areas of land meant for the cultivation of winter vegetables were still lying uncultivated as tilling of

have been suffering from acute scarcity of water rendered by inadequate rainfall which would have a telling effect upon the aman paddy in those areas, it is being widely apprehended.

Crisis of water has also become acute in those areas due to the closure of the months of rivers Ichhamati and Baral with the rivers Hurasagar and the Padma through the sluice gates constructed under the Pabna Irrigation and Rural Development Project.



PABNA: A village in Bhangura union of Bera thana was flooded for the second time this year. Flood water from Jamuna enters the area which takes a long time to recede. — Star photo