

Tk 21,000 snatched, victim assaulted in Moulvibazar

From Our Correspondent
MOULVI BAZAR, Aug 28: A group of alleged terrorists snatched away Tk 21,000 from Samir Miah and assaulted him at Mission-gate area of Moulvibazar town recently. Police said, Samir Miah of North Jagannathpur village under Sadar thana purchased a plot of land. On the day of incident, he came to the land seller. When he reached at Mission-gate area a group of alleged terrorists attacked him and snatched his money and kidnapped. Later, passers-by rescued Samir Miah and admitted him to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital. As his condition worsened, he was shifted to Osmani Medical College Hospital. Joygur Bibi, mother of the victim filed a case with Moulvibazar Sadar Police Station. Police arrested one Sabuj in connection with the incident.

Father commits suicide after killing daughters

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Aug 28: Father committed suicide after killing his two minor daughters by taking pesticides at Chaklapara area in the town Sunday night, police sources said. According to police sources, Kalipada, a gambler was leading his life in hardship. Following a quarrel between Kalipada and his wife at one stage Kalipada forced his daughters Puspa, 7, and Lipi, 5, to take pesticides. He also took the same. They were rushed to the Jhenidah sadar hospital and died there at night. Unnatural death (UD) cases were filed with Jhenidah in this connection.

Two chopped to death in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Aug 28: Two persons were chopped to death and another was injured by rival group at Singi bazar in Kaliganj thana of the district Sunday night, police sources said. According to police and eyewitnesses, Anwar Hossain Khokan, 30, a retailer was chopped to death by his rivals at about 7.30 pm on the spot. When his friends Azizul, 32, and Serajul, 33, came to help Khokan, they received severe injuries and were rushed to the Jhenidah sadar hospital in critical condition. Of them, injured Azizul, succumbed to his injuries at about 2.30 am.

Fodder crisis in Kishoreganj

From Our Correspondent
KISHOREGANJ, Aug 28: Acute scarcity of fodder has been prevailing throughout Kishoreganj district for the last few weeks. It was gathered that scarcity of fodder has been attributed to the heavy damage of grass and other kinds of fodder like straw in the recent incessant rains. All the fields, especially in the low-lying areas, has gone under water resulting acute crisis of fodder.

According to the District Livestock Department, there are more than nine lakh livestock in the district. There is officially no grazing field in the district as a result farmers are facing difficulties in lending and feeding their cows, goats and buffaloes.

This has resulted in the gradual loss of health in the part of thousands of cattlehead on one hand and sharp fall in the supply of milk on the other. Straw has become a luxury for the cattle. It is now selling at Taka 150 per maund in the markets. On the other hand, prices of oil-cake, bran etc used as fodder have also gone beyond the purchasing capacity of farmers.

As a result, thousands of cattleheads throughout the district have been reduced to skin and bone and many of them are on the point of death for want of fodder. A large number of cattlehead have fallen prey to various diseases due to semi-starvation.

Many cultivators, being unable to feed the cattleheads and cope with this abnormal situation are selling their cattle at a nominal price.

Phensidyl recovered, three held

From Our Correspondent
FARIDPUR, Aug 28: Kotwali police arrested three persons and recovered 38 bottles of phensidyl from their possession on August 24. According to police source, a contingent of police headed by SSI Jahangir Hossain acting on secret information chased the incumbents and caught hold of three persons along with the phensidyl in front of hotel Luxury at Goalhat in the town.

The arrested persons are M N Azad Khan, 18, son of late Ameer Hossain Khan of West Khabashpur-2, Golam Rabbani Babu, 20, son of late Ramjan Ali Mosedal West Khabashpur-3 and Delwar Hossain Babu, 21, son of late Waheed Molla of Khursha.

Besides, Jewel, 22, son of Abdus Sattar of West Khabashpur fled away from the scene. A case was lodged with Kotwali police in this connection.

Effective policy needed to rehabilitate handloom workers

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Aug 28: Due to the absence of a proper and effective policy for the handloom industries, about 42,397 handlooms of the greater Pabna district were lying idle. As a result, 1,27,197 handloom workers have gone unemployed. These unemployed workers, with their dependents have been passing their days amid ex-

cess of them, a total of 77,000 looms were now lying idle for want of raw materials, finance, marketing and other necessary facilities. The report further reveals that 42,000 more looms were lying formally closed due also to similar reasons.

The survey report says that in this greater district which now comprises Pabna and

as follows: In all, 215 looms out of 600 in Faridpur thana; 1,154 looms out of 4,038 looms in Bera thana; 1,912 looms out of 4,480 in Santhia thana; 1,060 looms out of 2,941 in Sujanagar thana; 248 out of 642 looms in Chaitmohar thana; 660 out of 1,396 looms in Aigharia thana; 135 out of 930 looms in

looms in Kazipur thana; 2,596 out of 6,023 looms in Chouhall thana and 7,934 out of 24,457 looms in Shahzadpur thana already were closed down.

Meanwhile, the owners of the handloom factories were given loan at the rate of Taka 5,000 to Taka 6,000 per loom by the then government in 1994 with the aim of rehabilitating and developing the handloom industry but it is widely alleged that thousands of fake loom owners, having no loom at all, many falsely registered their names by illegally influencing a section of the government officials and bank managers or employees took the opportunity of taking such loans.

The allegations further add that thousands of genuine handloom owners not even making any prayer for sanction of such loans were sanctioned and a large number of 'loans' in collusion with the corrupt bank officials, employees and others, put forged signature and thereby withdrew the loan money.

The holy purpose for which hundreds of crores of Taka were distributed as loans, could not be fulfilled. Most of the loanees did not or would not repay the loans. Several thousands of cases for recovery of loans were started, many warrants against the defaulters were pending while many others were rotting in jails.

Mofazzal Hossain, a leader of the Weavers' Association of Pabna, narrated the above story and claimed that in fact the purpose of such loan-distribution was political.

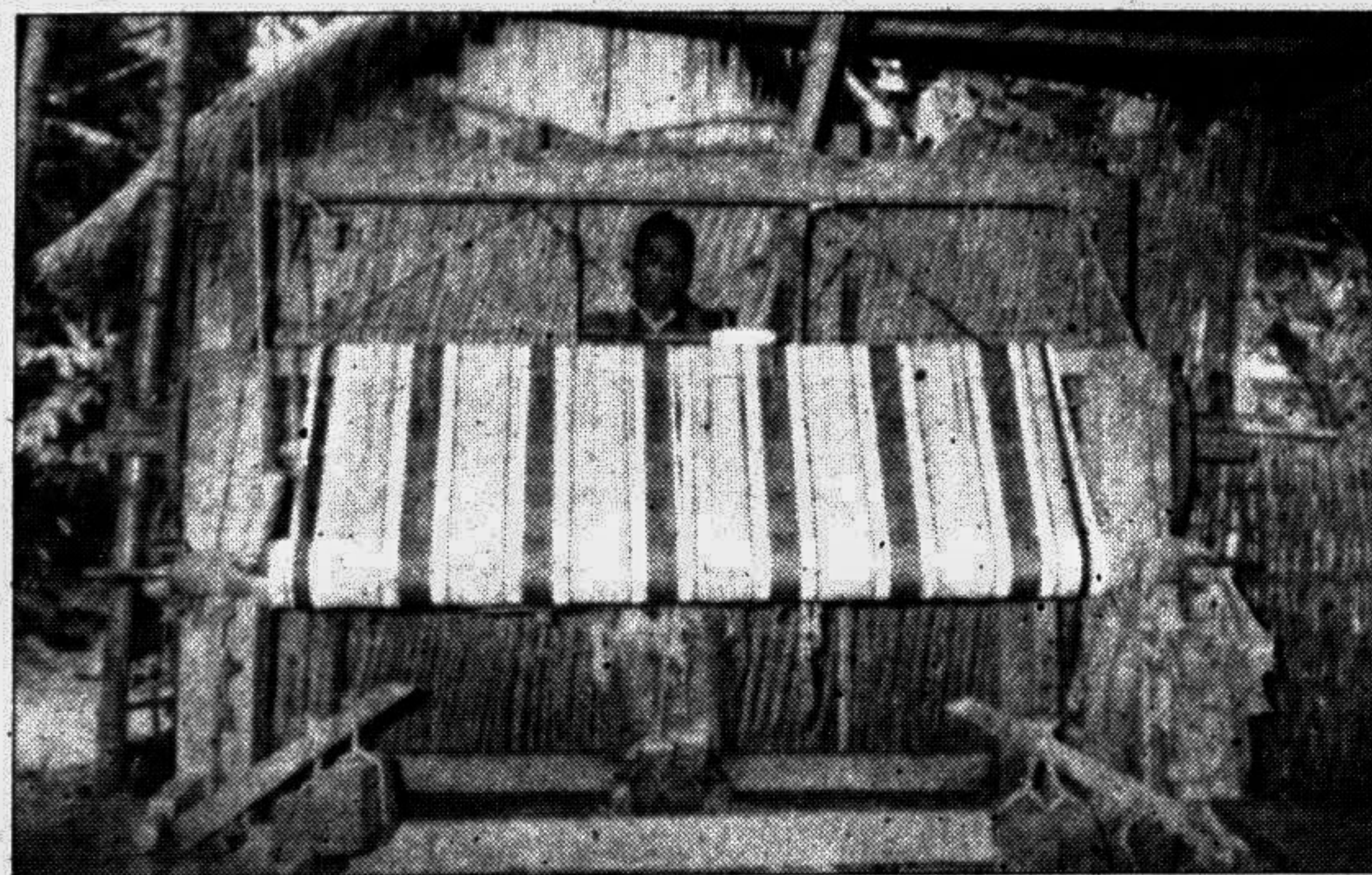
However, Mofazzal Hossain demanded that the loans should be written off, genuine handloom owners should be freshly registered and fresh loan on easy term, with arrangements to proper check-up at regular intervals should be introduced so that loan money was properly utilized and timely recovery could be ensured.

He also demanded withdrawal of all pending cases and putting an end to all sorts of harassments to the genuine handloom owners.

Abdul Mazid, another leader of weaving community of Dogachiji, known widely for producing famous 'Pabna Saree' told that the government, if genuinely willing to rejuvenate this sector, should arrange proper registration of handloom owners, sanction fresh loans of the needy ones, provide them with yarn, chemicals and other raw materials needed by them at cheaper rates so that their production cost could be reduced. Thus, the sector could be given a fresh lease of life.

The unemployment problem in the rural areas could also be solved to a certain extent and dependence on the Indian saree could also be reduced.

It may be recalled here in this connection that the greater district of Pabna was famous for the production of quality saree, lungi, bedsheet etc, but Pabna lost its glory in this sector due to the above problems for a pretty long time.



PABNA: A female handloom weaver is seen working in a loom at Ataikula, 12 miles from Pabna town. — Star photo

treme difficulties and untold miseries.

The above figure was available from a survey report. The survey was conducted by an official agency a few months back.

The report says that in the greater Pabna district, about three lakhs can be employed in about 1,80,220 handlooms but

Siraganj districts, a total quantity of 5,15,00,000 yards of cloth were produced earlier but as against this, only 3,65,00,000 yards of cloth are being produced.

The survey report also reveals a thana-wise report of the situation prevailing in this sector in the 18 thanas of the greater district. The picture is

Ishaurdi thana; 125 out of 230 looms in Bhangora thana; 2,691 out of 3,632 looms in Pabna sadar-thana; 8,181 out of 27,039 looms in Belkuchi thana; 7,710 out of 16,000 looms in Ullapara thana; 498 out of 1,229 looms in Kamarkhanda thana; 7,800 out of 24,441 looms in Siraganj sadar thana; 180 out of 569



PABNA: Women weavers working at a spinning wheel. It is their leisure-hour job for meeting the needs of their family. Both the women hail from Dogachi. — Star photo

Wide spread use of chemical fertilizers in N-dists contributing to reduction in fish output

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Aug 28: Wide spread use of chemical fertilizers in Northern districts and unilateral withdrawal of Ganges water through Farakka in India is contributing to reduction in fish output in the region, experts observed.

Fish production in the northern region of the country cannot be improved due to the adverse effects of the unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water through Farakka by India, according to pisciculture experts.

Some pisciculture experts of this region, while talking to this correspondent, also identified uncontrolled use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers in the crop-field as another major reason behind the low fish output.

Explaining the causes behind the setback of pisciculture in the northern region, the experts said that the unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water from the upstream at Farakka

has dried up the mighty Padma river, its tributaries canals and beels. The Chalan beel, Hater beel and other internal water bodies remain dry for eight months from November to June every year, they said.

Minor girl killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent
KISHOREGANJ, Aug 28: A minor girl was killed in an accident on Kishoreganj-Mymensingh road at Baraigram in Nardail thana on August 22, police sources informed. The victim identified as Marufa, 4, daughter of Abu Siddique met tragic end of her life while she was run over by a Mymensingh-bound passenger bus. She died instantly. Police seized the bus while the driver fled the scene immediately after the accident.

About 25 per cent pesticides and chemical fertilizers, used in the crop-lands, were mixed with the nearer water bodies like canal, beel etc and hindered pisciculture in this region, the experts said adding that about 4 lakh metric tons of pesticide and chemical fertilizer were used every year in the crop-lands to combat pests.

According to the experts, the immediate effect of the pesticide retains actions upto five-years. Most of the fingerlings can not survive as such an adverse environment.

The experts also disclosed that more than 200 species of fish either became extinct or were likely to face extinction during the last 15 years in these areas.

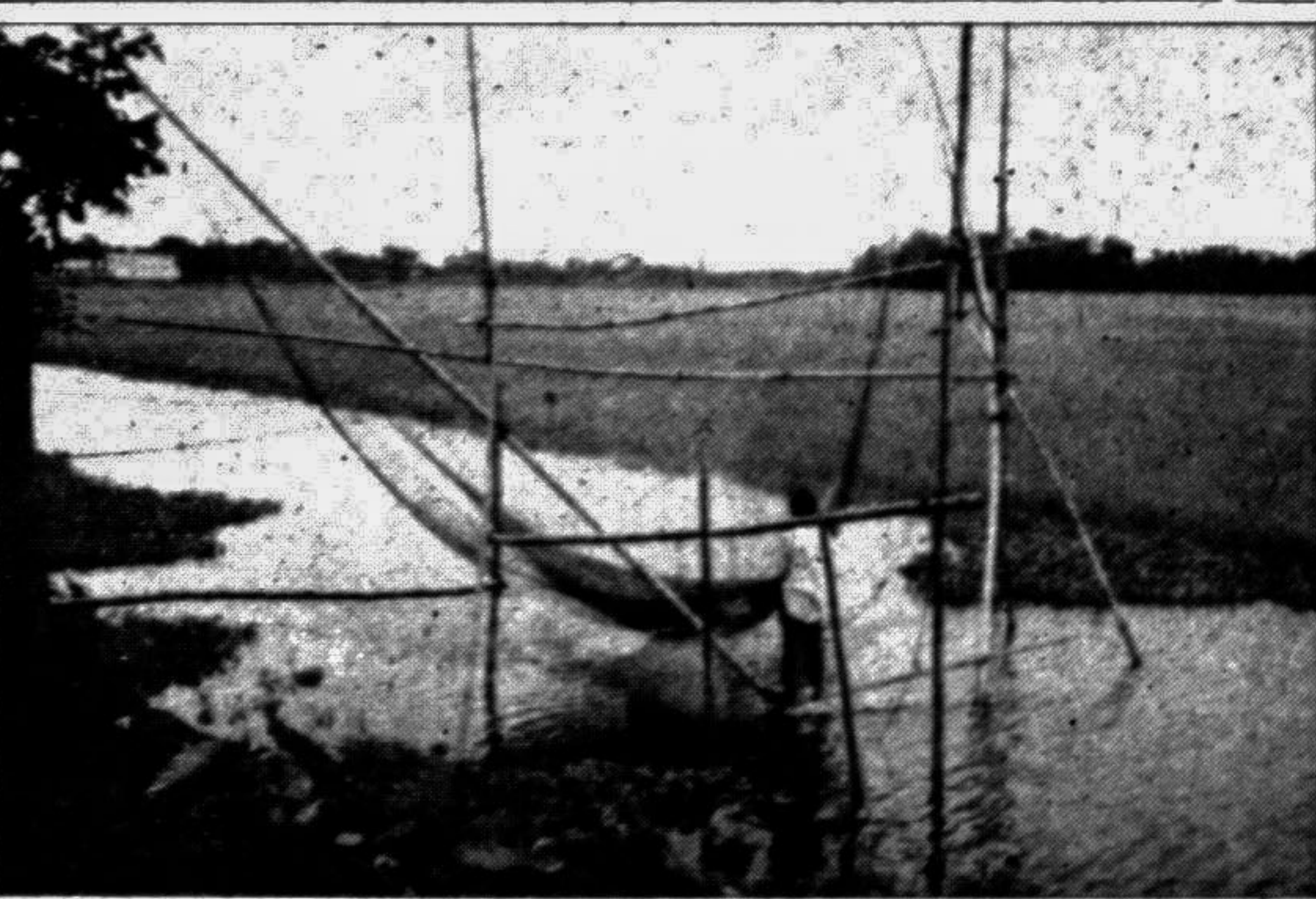
The fish production from the internal open water bodies like canal, beel and haors has been decreased to 49 per cent in 1992-93 from 90 per cent in the 60s.

According to official sources, of the total water bod-

ies in the 16 districts of this region, there are 1,31, 518 hectares of rivers and canals, 33,694 hectares of beels, 6,098 hectares of flood-lands and 78,599 hectares of ponds and closed water reservoirs. There are also 70,291 hectares of derelict ponds.

On an average, a total of 1.23 lakh metric tons of fishes were produced from this region, the sources said.

However, the experts says, invention of fast growing species of fish, lessening, restoration of water through the bottom of the water reservoirs, introduction of modern technology, controlled use of pesticide and chemical fertilizer, loan facilities of effective training on pisciculture and overall restoration of the due share of the Ganges water can help boost fish production in this region.



CHANDPUR: Catching fish by nets of this nature is a common scene in rural areas during rainy season. This recent picture was taken from Chandpur district. — Star photo

Kirtonkhola continues to grab fresh areas

From Aroop Talukdar

less than 6 crore taka, local and official sources said.

BARISAL, Aug 28: The continuous erosion of the Kirtonkhola river since start of the season is going on almost unabated.

Meantime, the Kirtonkhola river along the Barisal town and on the otherside, Charkaua union has eroded huge tracts of cropland, leaving several hundred people homeless.

Recently, a huge tracts of cropland and business establishments, hats and bazars including educational institutions and religious in situations were engulfed by the river. The Water Development Board (WDB) authority in the face of public agitation started taking measures to control the ongoing erosion of the river, and thus block piling was started. As a result more or less erosion was checked in some areas of the union. But the other side of the river continued its menace.

Very recently erosion once again turned furious threatening Charkaua senior madrasa, Charkaua mosque and a large portion of the bazar area including some homesteads.

Mentionable, starting from some years back the river erosion grabbed, nearly ten kilometres of cropland including various standing crops, agriculture office, an ice mill, automatic rice mill, brick fields, three leather godowns, Charkaua ferry ghat, primary school and nearly five hundred dwelling houses that cost not

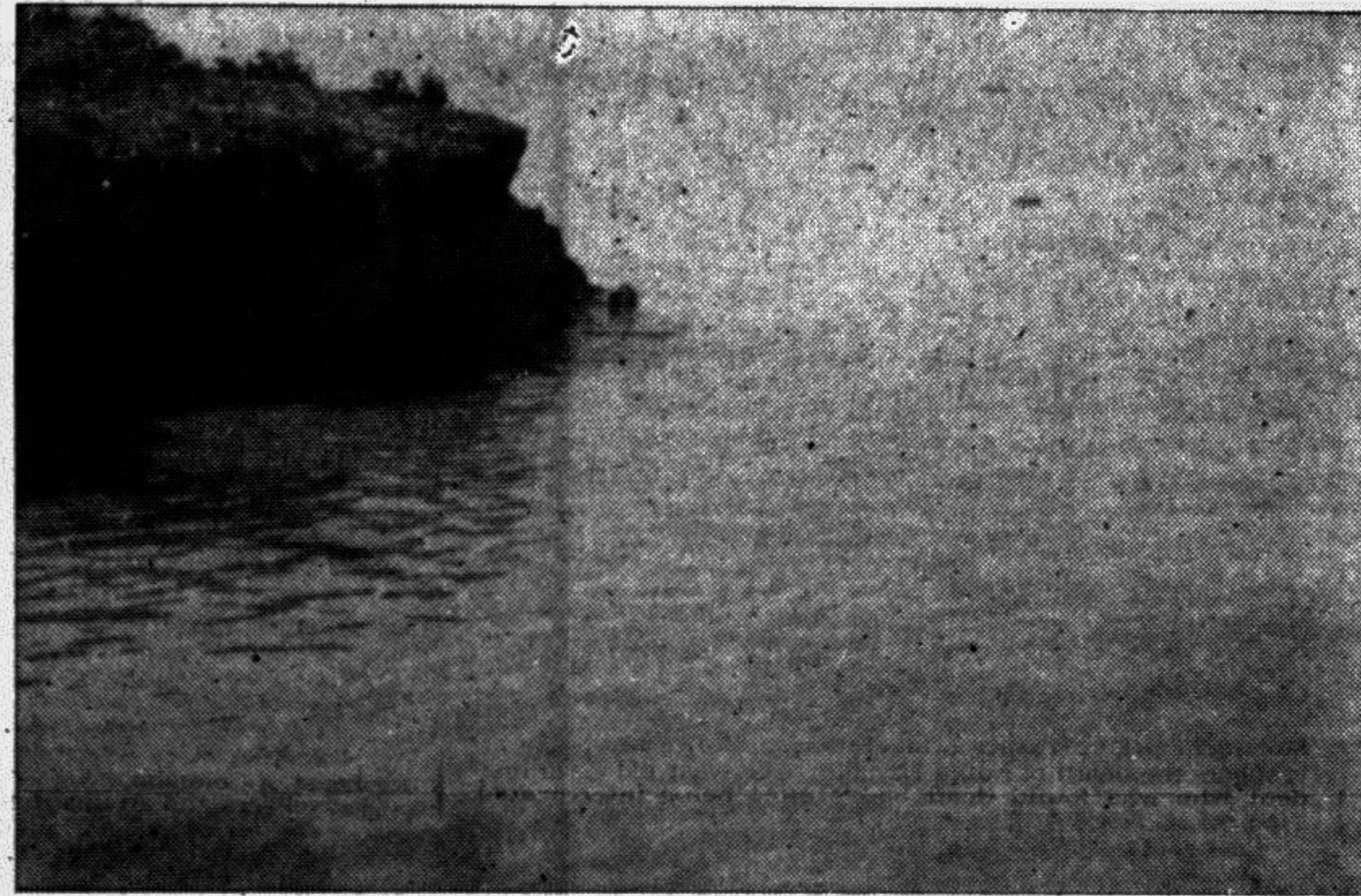
eroding fast-devouring several hundreds of acres of cropland, business establishments, educational institutions rendering thousands of people shelterless. Sandhya river along the Shikarpur ferry ghats threatening the very existence of the Shikarpur Sher-e-Bangla Degree College building.

On the otherside, the Arial Khan river with strong current eroded miles after miles along the Mirjagong area under Babuganj thana area of the district.

Local people said, it may not be possible to control the ongoing erosion of the river as it has already taken serious turn.



BARISAL: Kirton Khola river eroded Charkma area very fast. Local people were shifting their houses somewhere else. — Star photo



BARISAL: River Areal Khan being widened day by day eroding both the sides unabated at Mirganj. — Star photo

Social mobilisation against early marriage, polygamy, dowry

BRAHMANBARIA, Aug 28: Several thousand opinion leaders in six thanas of Brahmanbaria district have been trained up with a view to mobilising public opinion against early marriage, polygamy and dowry, reports UNB.

A total of 4,105 opinion leaders of Sarail, Akhaura, Kosba, Nabinagar, Bancharampur and Sadar thana have been imparted training through 141 workshops on health and family planning.

Save the Children Federation, USA and the district Family Planning Department jointly organised the work-

shops participated by village opinion leaders, including imams and muazzins, school and madrasa teachers, UP chairmen and members.

The workshops were held between November 1995 and June 1996, said a press release Friday.

The participants have identified some acute social problems and reached a consensus that population growth was the main cause behind all the social and family troubles.

They have also attributed early marriage, polygamy and dowry to the population growth. They are mobilising public

opinion against early marriage, polygamy and dowry in their respective areas.

Earlier, in 1992, 26 workshops were held as experimental basis first in Nasiragar thana of Brahmanbaria. Some 718 rural and religious leaders from 13 unions of the thana took part in the workshops.

Before the workshop, the rate of Contraceptive Acceptance Rate (CAR) in Nasiragar thana was 34 per cent. A study conducted by the University Research Corporation found that the rate of CAR has increased from 34 per cent to 52 per cent after the workshops.



BRAHMANBARIA: Photo shows the participants in a two-day workshop on Health and Family Planning, special focusing on early marriage, polygamy and dowry, jointly organised by the Save the Children Federation (USA) and district Family Planning Department. The participants were Village Headmen, mosque imams, muazzins, teachers, village doctors and others from six thanas of the district.

Flood hits Jamalpur second time

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Aug 28: For the second time flood hits the district which started six days back.

With the onrush of hilly water from Indian border, sharply rising water level in all the rivers under the district.

During the period of last six days level of Brahmaputra did not cross the danger mark.

Thirty-five unions out of 67 in seven thanas of the district were affected by the flood. About 40 per cent areas of the district went under waters.

estimated the loss due to flood.

According to local sources the second time flood damaged recently transplanted aman paddy on over seventy thousand acres of land. Many new point of flood protection embankment have been damaged.

About 50,000 people of the district are passing their days in misery.

Meanwhile, the river Jamuna eroding the bank of eastern side has also devoured vast tract of land including Bahadurabad railway ferry ghat and educational institutions.

Clash leaves woman dead, minor girl injured in Sathkhira

SATKHIRA, Aug 28: An old woman was killed and a minor girl injured in a clash over a land dispute at Jahaghat village in Shyamnagar thana here on Saturday, reports UNB.

Villagers said, the clash ensued between Ameena Khatun, 70, and co-villager Majid over the possession of a plot of land.

During the clash, Ameena and her niece Jarina, 2, were injured seriously and they were admitted to Shyamnagar hospital. Later Ameena succumbed at the hospital.

The body was sent to the morgue for autopsy. A case was filed but none was arrested so far.