

News snaps

One crushed under wheels of train

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, July 17: One person was fatally run over by a running train at Bonarpura Railway Station on July 10. According to Railway sources, in the morning a Santaher-bound local train was on move from Bonarpura station toward its destination. The victim, Tipu, 18, of village Bati under Shaghata thana suddenly jumped down on the rooftop of the train from an overbridge. But unfortunately he fell down into the gap between two bogies and crushed under the wheel of the train. The victim succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital. A case was filed with GRP thana in this connection.

Fire renders 5,000 families homeless

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, July 17: At least 300 fire incidents occurred in Rangpur district in the last one year, a fire brigade source said. The loss of properties was estimated to be Taka 2 crores. About 400 dwelling houses, over three hundred cow-sheds, seven jute godowns and about 100 shops and industries were gutted totally. More than 5,000 families were rendered homeless.

2 housewives commit suicide

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 17: Two housewives of Kumarkhali thana have committed suicide on the same day. Thekari Begum, 40, when failed to bear the atrocities perpetrated on her by her gambler husband Mohasin Ali of village Silpur in Kumarkhali thana took poison to commit suicide recently.

On the same night Rina Khatun, 27, wife of Khairul Islam of the same village took poison to commit suicide. Police, on getting information, sent the bodies to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy. Two separate unnatural death cases have been lodged with Kumarkhali police station in this connection.

School boy commits suicide

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, July 17: A school boy committed suicide recently.

According to a local source, the victim, Bulbul, 11, son of Bagar Mia of Shikigram in Alifadanga thana consumed poison as he was rebuked for not going to school. He was rushed to Alifadanga hospital where he succumbed. A case was lodged with Alifadanga thana in this connection.

Chudanga Shishu Sadan expanded

CHUDANGA, July 17: The expansion of the local government Shishu Sadan has been completed at a total cost of Taka one crore and 26 lakhs, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the expansion work include, construction of a four storied dormitory building, two staff quarters, one pre-primary school building, office building and a training centre. The Public Works Department has implemented the scheme.

Orientation course on scouting

MANIKGANJ, July 17: A one-day orientation course on scouting and cubbing was held at the auditorium of government high school recently, reports BSS.

One hundred and seven headmasters of government primary schools in Manikganj sadar thana took part in the course. Sultan Uddin Ahmed, Headmaster, Manikganj Government High School presided over the orientation course.

BRDB scheme to help poor people

CHANDPUR, July 17: Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) has undertaken a comprehensive scheme to help poor people of different professions to attain self-reliance, reports BSS.

According to official sources, short-term loan of over Taka three crore was distributed among 5,475 poor people of different professions in the current year. The loans were provided for investment in small business, dairy farms, pisciculture and vegetable cultivation, and cottage industry in the rural area. Besides, about 5,000 poor and unemployed people in the rural areas were given training to attain self-reliance in different professions.

Noakhali SP meets editors of weeklies

NOAKHALI, July 17: The Police Super of Noakhali Abdur Rouf held a meeting with the editors of local weeklies and correspondents of different national dailies and medias at Noakhali Press Club on July 1, reports BSS.

Addressing the journalists the police super sought cooperation of all including the journalists to make the anti-terrorist campaign launched in the district a success.

Piracy on rise in haor areas

SUNAMGANJ, July 17: The harassment of passengers on various river routes and fishermen in haor areas of the district at the hands of pirates have increased much during the recent months, reports UNB.

Local people complained that the pirates are specially active in Shani, Matiyon, Tangua, Kharacha, Dekhar Haor and Nalua Haor areas. They attack the passengers and fishermen and snatch away their cash, catches and even the boats. In some cases, the pirates demand ransom for release of the people abducted by them, said the villagers of the area.

Donation to public library

KUSHTIA, July 17: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Council (BRAC) has donated Tk 50,000 to Philip Nagar Gono Unnayan Pathagar (Public Library) of Daulatpur thana in the district, reports UNB.

The money will be spent to purchase new books to enable the community members to read new books. The cheque of the amount was handed over to the president of the Pathagar Adv Yakub Ali Biswas by Alok Kumar Mondal, Area Officer of BRAC recently at a simple ceremony. The function was also attended by Mohammad Ali, Area Manager of BRAC, local teachers and public representatives.

Problems grip Madaripur Hospital

MADARIPUR, July 17: The Sadar Hospital of the district has been grappled with various problems, including crisis of medicine and lack of physicians, reports UNB.

A large number of patients, particularly women among 12 lakh people of the thana, are being deprived of medicare facilities as the hospital, the only recourse for them, has no surgeon or gynecologist. More worrying is that two posts of Medical Officer in the hospital have been lying vacant for a long time. Apart from this, some of the new doctors posted to the hospital have not yet taken up their new assignment, adding fuel to the sufferings of the patients, hospital sources said.

Rivals' clash leaves 15 injured

MYMENSINGH, July 17: At least 15 people were injured, five seriously, in a clash between two rival groups of villagers over constructing a dam on a canal at Beer Battala Char area in sadar thana here recently, reports UNB.

The five seriously injured were rushed to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. They are identified as Shahjahan, 30, Moymor Ali, 27, Abdul Malek, 80, Abul Kalam, 35, and Jalal Miah, 30. Police sources said, a group led by Shahjahan went to the char area to construct the dam for fishing at about 10 am. But another group led by Abdul Malek raised objection to it and at one stage both the groups locked in clashes that left 15 people injured. Two separate cases were filed with the police.

Bumper production of wheat in Netrakona

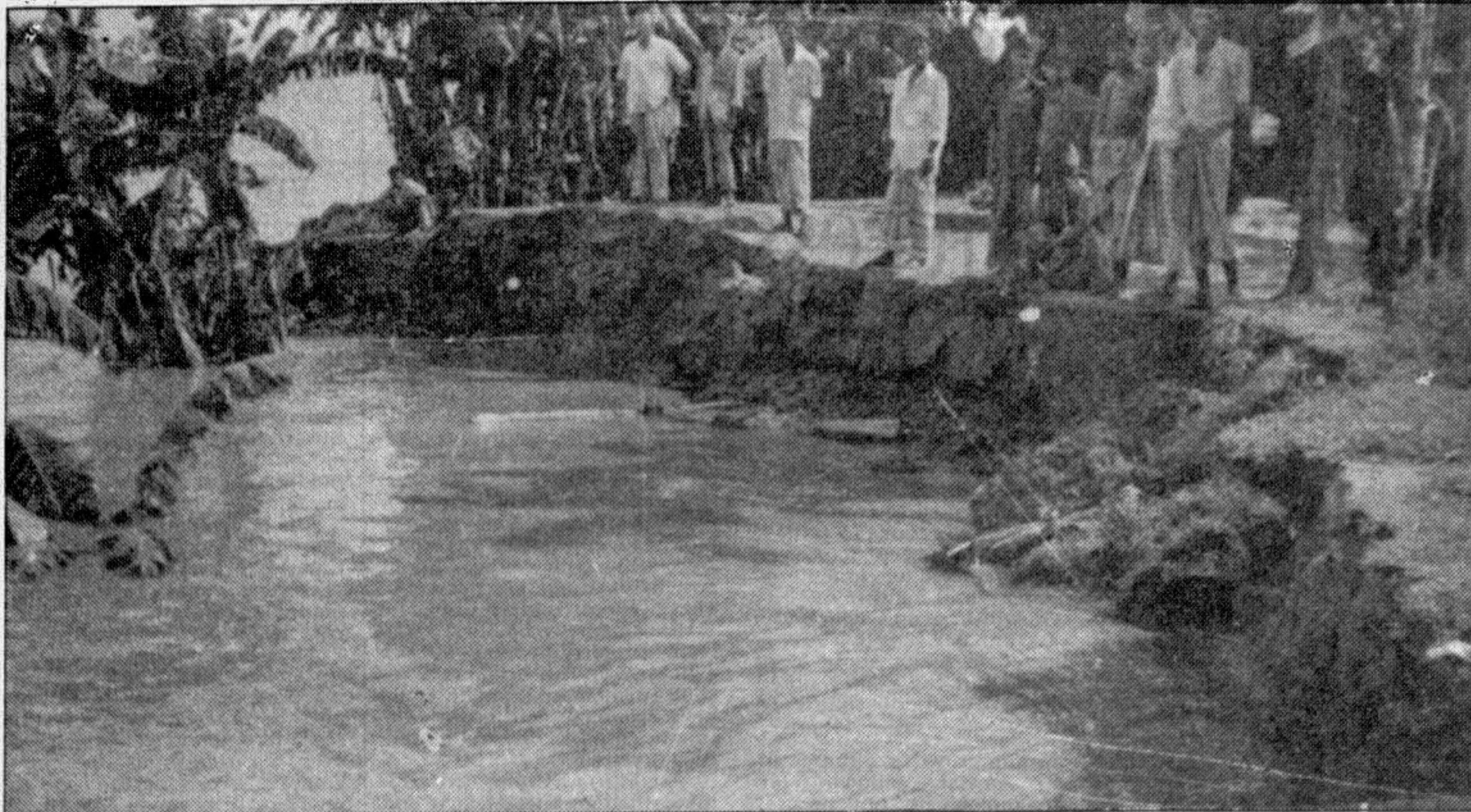
NETRAKONA, July 17: Over 15,150 tonnes of wheat were produced in the 10 thanas of Netrakona district this year, reports BSS.

According to District Agriculture Extension Department, 7,800 hectares were brought under wheat cultivation in the district this year. Different government agencies including BADC, BCIC and Bangladesh Krishi Bank provided the wheat growers with seeds, fertilisers and agricultural loan and field workers of the district agricultural extension department rendered field level service for cultivation of wheat.

Alleged terrorists handed over to police

SYLHET, July 17: Local people handed over two men to the police last week on charge of unleashing terrorism and extortion of money from the town and Badaghat area here, reports UNB.

A pipe gun was also seized from one of them, said police. Of them, Abdul Matin of Noagaon in sadar thana was caught by the people at Badaghat in sadar thana on Thursday. A pipe gun was recovered from his possession. The other man, identified as Solesman, was handed over to police while he was trying to collect toll of Tk 50,000 from journalist Arif Rabbani on gun point at Khasadibir area. Four of his accomplices managed to flee the spot. Separate cases were filed with police in these connection.



CHANDPUR: Erosion of the river Meghna going unabated at Haimchar Bazar in the district. — Star photo by Shirin Akhter

Meghna erosion threatens Chandpur Irrigation Project dam at Haimchar

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, July 17: The erosion of the river Meghna is threatening the existence of Taka 100-crore embankment of Chandpur Irrigation Project at Haimcharbazar in Haimchar thana.

The erosion in the area is continuing for the last one month. About 200 acres of agricultural land have already been eroded in the Meghna. The erosion is continuing from Haimchar to Milkamal along the bank of the river Meghna alarmingly. The river Meghna now stands at one hundred metre away from the embankment.

According to Chandpur office sources of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), if the erosion continues at the present pace about five kilometre areas of the embankment will be eroded soon.

As a result one lakh seventy-five thousand acres of land within 54 miles embankment will be flooded and crops worth

several crores of taka will be damaged. The erosion in the area has been intensified due to onrush of water during the on-going rainy season. Severe currents and waves flowing through the river have caused serious erosion.

It may be mentioned, the original embankment situated about five miles away from the present embankment was eroded by the Meghna at least three times. About 10,000 people were rendered homeless in the area due to erosion during the last one year.

About five thousand people have taken shelter on the embankment and living a sub-human life. So far BWDB constructed retarded embankment in the area at least three times at a cost of Taka 10 crores. Earlier the embankment was eroded three times. BWDB officials told this correspondent, they are trying to check the erosion by dumping bricks and

sand bags in the eroded area. An amount of Taka 40 lakh has already been spent for the purpose.

Chandpur Irrigation Project is one of the biggest irrigation project of BWDB. The project was established in 1978 at a cost of Taka 100 crores. The project area covers an area of about two lakh acres of land in Chandpur and Laximpur districts.

Our Barisal Correspondent says: With the advent of the rainy season erosion of various rivers has been intensified further in the southern region of the country.

Continuous erosion of the rivers Paira, Baleswar and Bishkhali has been going on unabated. A huge tract of cropland, several thousands business establishments, education institutions and dwelling houses had been devoured during the last five years at different places of Bar-

guna district. Worst affected areas are Amtali, Taltali, Bagirhat, Purakata, Golbunia, Burirchar, Joalbhanga, Betagi, Bama, Ramna, Chalabanga, Kalmegha, Fuljhuri, Badnikhali, Dalbhanga and Nali.

The government food godown situated at the end of Amtalbandar is how very close to the erosion area. Betagi, Bama and Kakchira bazar areas will be devoured within a short time by the Bishkhali river.

More than 30 kilometres embankment ring have already been devoured in the river at Charduani, Kalmegha, and Kakchira in Patrhghata thana of Barguna district. As a result several hundred acres of cropland went under water.

Thousands of ill-fated people have been rendered homeless and shelterless. They are now leading a sub-human life under the open sky on the streets or on the embankments. Now they are totally helpless.

Eight commit suicide in 5 districts in a week

MAGURA, July 17: Eight people reportedly committed suicide by taking poison in different districts of the country during the last week, reports UNB.

Police said one Dipali Rani Biswas, 20, wife of Manab Kumar Biswas of Tikhari village in Shaikha thana of Magura district and Abdul Latif, 24, son of Montaz Mullah of Saighoria village in the same thana killed themselves over family feuds.

In Jamalpur district: One Rezia Begum, 35, of Mohanganj village in Sarishabari thana took poison on Sunday and died soon after admission to Jamalpur General Hospital.

UNB correspondent from Sylhet reports: Two people took their own lives by taking poison in the district on July 10.

Police said a middle-aged man, Intaz Ali, 40, of Roymgan in Sadar thana took poison and died on the day immediately after admission to Osmany Medical College Hospital.

In another incident in the same district, a teen-aged girl, Amina Begum, 14, of Faridpur village in Fenchuganj thana committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling bar.

Another report from Satkhira adds: One Kabita

Rani, 20, wife of Kartik Sarkar of Batkali village and Dipalee, 25, wife of Shawkat Ali of Kukurali village in Sadar thana killed themselves by taking poison on Wednesday.

In Habiganj district: Wahida Khatun, 22, wife of Abdul Kadir of Mirashi village in Chunarughat thana took her own life by taking poison over a family feud recently, police said.

The bodies of the victims were sent to concerned hospital morgues for autopsy. Separate UD cases were filed.

New passport office at Faridpur

FARIDPUR, July 17: The new regional passport office in the town started functioning from Thursday, obviating the long time demand of the local people, reports UNB.

According to a senior official, from now on people of Faridpur, Rajbari, Shariatpur, Madaripur and Gopalganj districts will be able to make their international passports from this office instead of the Dhaka office.

9.50 tonnes of rice allocated for Bandarban flood victims

BANDARBAN, July 17: The Bandarban district administration has allocated 9.50 tonnes of rice as relief on an emergency basis for distribution among the flood affected people of the district town, Lama and Thanchi thanas on Wednesday, the district relief officer said, reports BSS.

He said, overall flood situation deteriorated due to flow of water from the hills.

A meeting was held here to discuss the overall flood situation of the district at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room on Wednesday.

Atiqul Islam Chowdhury, DC, Bandarban, presided over the meeting. The District Local Government Council chairman Thwaing Cha Pruemaster and Deputy Commissioner Atiqul Islam Chowdhury visited the flood affected areas of the district. At least 5,000 flood affected

families of the district town, Lama and Thanchi thanas have taken shelter at 18 primary schools and government buildings in the district.

District Health Department has formed 38 medical teams to treat patients of diarrhoeal diseases on an emergency basis. Sufficient medicines are also stored for necessary treatment.

Contraband worth Tk 3 cr seized

COMILLA, July 17: BDR jawans in separate drives seized contrabands worth over Tk 3.5 crore from frontier areas of Comilla and Brahmanbaria during the last six months, reports UNB.

The goods included 4,263 kg sugar, 7,437 kg salt, 12,172 pieces of saris and 1,571 cubic ft timber.

Illegal lease of marshy land: Crops on 500 acres threatened

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, July 17: Corruption and irregularities have allegedly been detected in the process of leasing out a vast tract of khas marshy land at village Char Haripur in Char Ishwardia union of the sadar thana.

It is learnt, there are about 34 acres of land in plot number 943, 1245, 572 and 573 in two water bodies of Char Haripur namely Naubhanga and Gazaria beel. It is the only source of irrigation, fishing and jute rotting water as there is no other water bodies in the village.

From ancient period people of the village and its adjacent areas have been using these wa-

ter bodies as free water source — the gift of nature. Now people of Char Haripur and its adjacent villages have been producing IRRI-Boro crop in their land by using water of the two water bodies during the dry season.

The neighbouring people of the area are rotting their jute in the two water bodies. The people are also using the water bodies to bathe their cattleheads. At least 500 fishermen of several villages use the water bodies to earn their livelihood by fishing.

It is alleged, some influential people of the area tactfully took lease of the said water bodies in the name of their relatives more than a decade ago and they kept

their leasing matter secret.

A few years ago the water bodies were transferred to the aforementioned influential persons through registration of deeds. Although according to the existing law of the country, uncultivable land, water bodies and lands which are being used for social welfare activities are strictly prohibited to lease out. Some dishonest officials of the concerned department tactfully handed over the lands in the interest of the land lords.

When this correspondent visited the spot he found that the so-called land purchasers had set up 10 ponds by constructing some embankments in the water bodies. They also

planted hundreds of saplings on the embankments. Even they constructed there a link road for their easy communication.

Hundreds of people told this correspondent that if these embankments were damaged, at least 500 acres of crop land and their houses would be flooded during the rainy season. They also informed that they would not be able to bring their lands under IRRI-Boro cultivation programme due to lack of irrigation facilities in the dry season. Not only that they would be deprived of separating fibre from jute plants due to lack of rotting, they alleged.



MYMENSINGH: Two illegal ponds on marshy land of Char Haripur. — Star photo

Influentials grabbing land of tribals in 16 districts

From A Correspondent

BOGRA, July 17: Aboriginal population of the northern districts are suffering a lot due to various problems.

Aboriginal people of 16 northern districts include Sawtal, Orao, Malo, Mahatho, Munda, Mahali Ganju, Malpahari, Kokamar. They have no sufficient food for two meals of the day. They have no house to live in comfortably. They are deprived of education and modern facilities of electricity even. Besides, most of the aboriginal families have no latrine of their own to maintain proper sanitation.

Some of the aboriginals are deprived of their rights by the influential groups. They are now being eliminated gradually due to their abject poverty, lack of healthcare facilities, social insecurity, and uncertainty of job. Their children are worst sufferers. They do not get sufficient food for their physical and mental development. Most of the families can not afford to provide necessary food for their children. The children are born and brought up uncared and in absolute negligence. It has been learnt from some members of aboriginals of Dinajpur, they are tortured very often when people come to purchase wine. Some of the aboriginal families produce and sell country-made wine. Some members of their families become victims of torture in the hands of wine purchasers. There are many instances of harassment by the local people.

Some families have been rendered landless for want of any regular and permanent source of income.

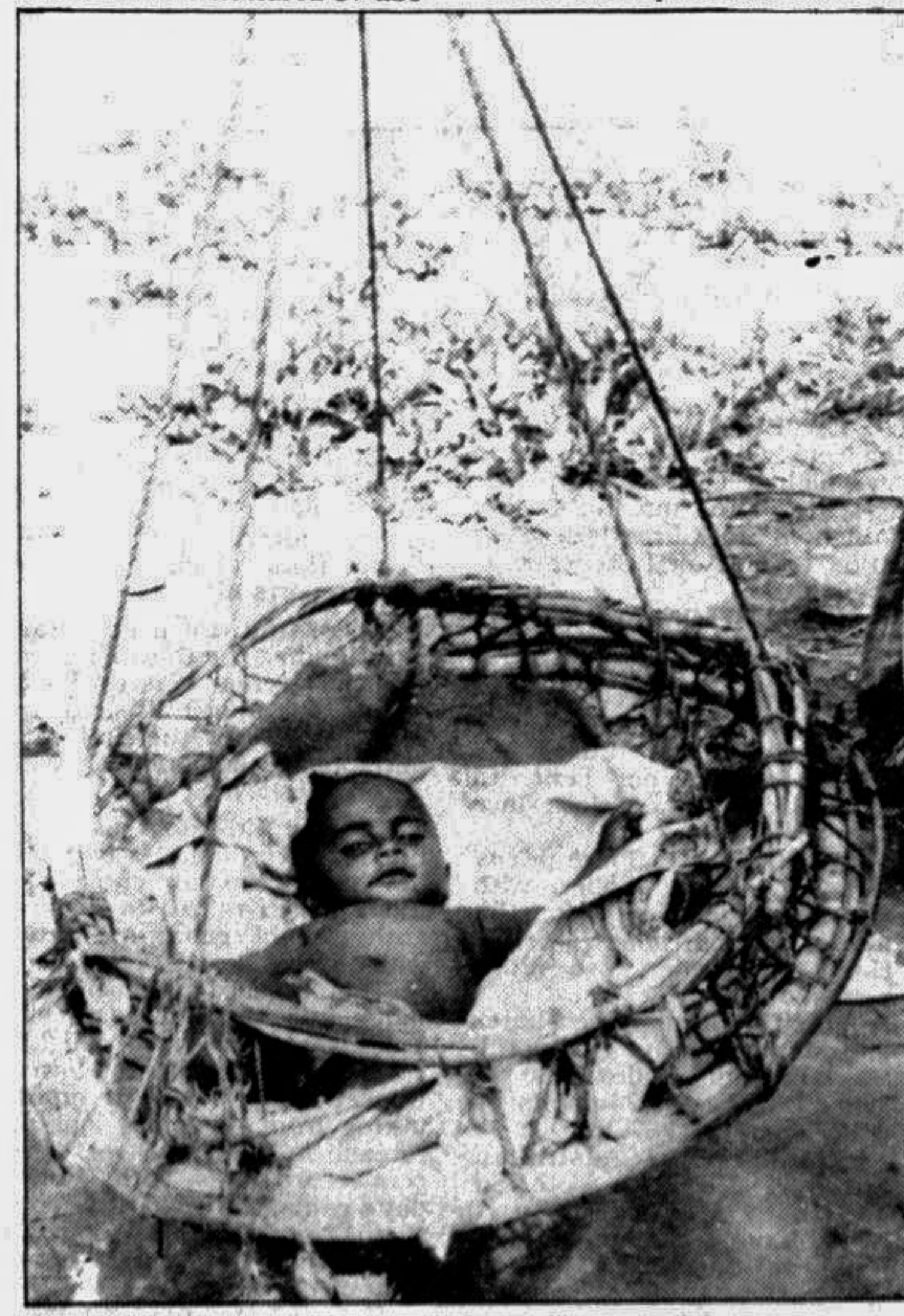
It has been revealed from a book written by Gonesh Sharen titled: 'Bon O Boner Adhibasht' published by Society for Environment and Human Development that there were no landless aboriginals in Dinajpur.

Now 60 per cent to 70 per cent of aboriginals are landless. Influential people forcibly took possession of their lands by manufacturing fake deeds. Many aboriginals have already

sold their lands and some others have been selling their lands. Many aboriginals are to pay to the extent of Tk 3 thousand when they go to sell their lands. Influentials demand a handsome amount of money when they hand over their lands to others.

There is no statistics of aboriginals. According to census report of 1991 there were 1 lakh 14 thousand 3 hundred 37 ab-

originals in 16 northern districts. There were 12 lakh 5 thousand 9 hundred and 78 aboriginals in the country as revealed from the census. Badla Orao, an officer of the Aboriginal Academy said, there were 3 lakh 22 thousand aboriginals in 1994 in Rajshahi division. The district level officers of the administration admitted that there were problems with the



A neglected aboriginal child. — Star photo



A typical house of aboriginals. — Star photo

lands of aboriginals. Influential people have been taking possession of the lands of aboriginals forcibly. Instances of unauthorised occupation of land may be cited. A total of 3.39 acres of land of khatian No 177 of Panchpukuria mauza of Dinajpur district have been occupied by the influential groups. A former officer of Telegraph and Telephone Department of Rajshahi area said to have done the same incident and has occupied lands of some aboriginals.

One Martina Tado, 55, of Pakpur narrated her problems. She has no house to live in. She lives with her daughter depending on her son-in-law. Her husband died long before. She does not have medicine, she has no money. She is now old enough to work.

Vinzen Saren, a student said that he had no money to purchase books. The head of his family cannot provide money for his education. He has to earn by himself. As such he

cannot go to school regularly. Saren, a student of class IX, cannot attend school timely as the communication system is



Innocent face of an aboriginal young girl. — Star photo

bad and he has no transport of his own.

Alpana Kisku read up to class III in Karitas school. She wanted to prosecute her studies. She cannot go to school due to abject poverty. Kisku wanted to be a government employee. But her dream may not be materialised for want of required educational qualification. She lives with her parents at Shon Khristanpara.

Jacob Murrur, 70, cannot walk properly. He feels sad as he cannot afford to spend money to prosecute studies for his children. He is worried for their future as the locals had occupied his land. He said, even the graveyard of aboriginals at Shon Khristanpara has been occupied by some influential locals. There are many regular incidents of unauthorised occupation of land all over the country. They have been thinking seriously about their fate. They urge the government to take necessary action to redress their problems.