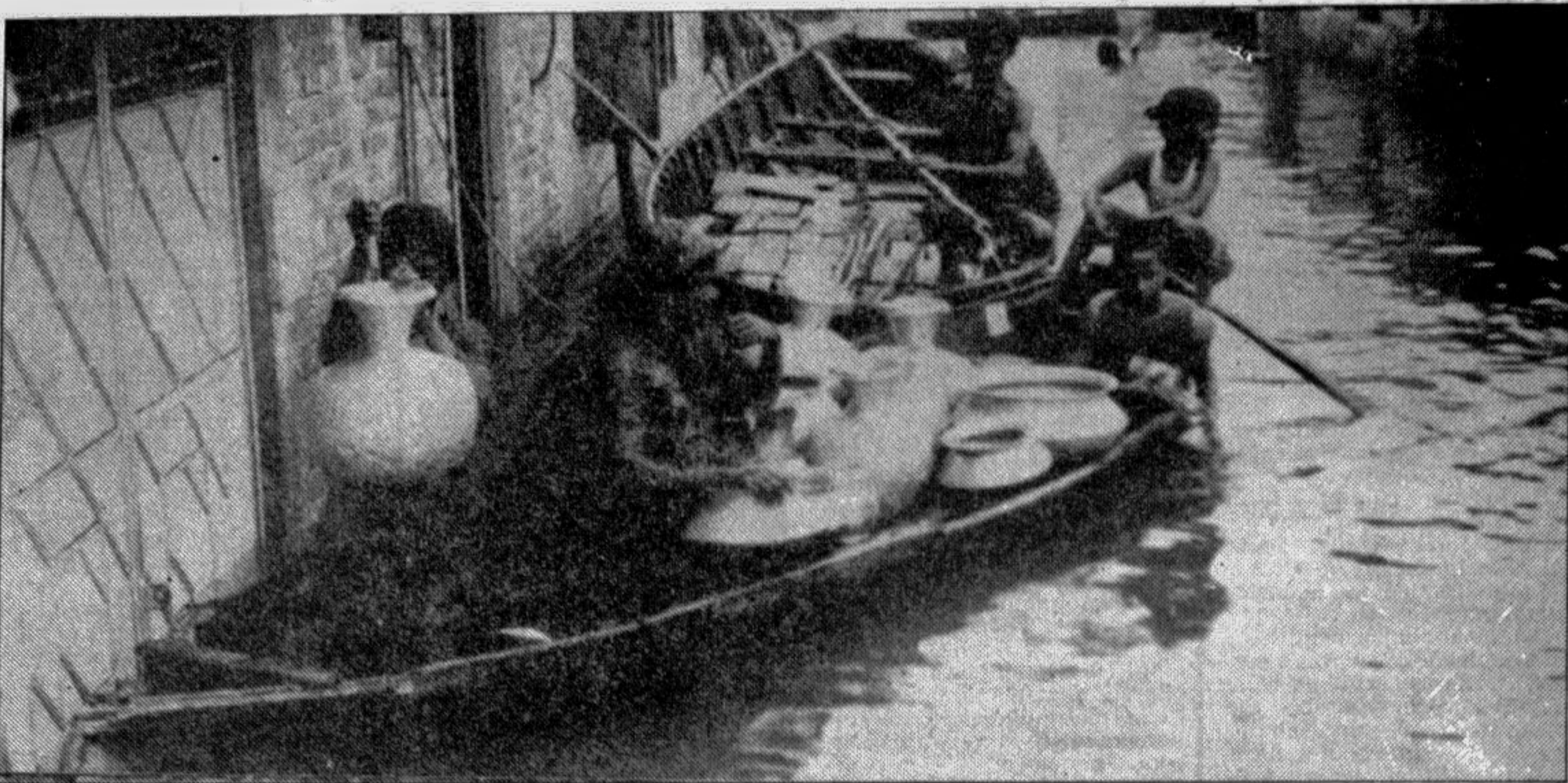


# Sustaining the Submersion

PHOTO FEATURE ON FLOOD



"Water water everywhere, not a drop to drink": Collecting drinking water from whatever source remained (Lalbagh). — Star photo by A K M Mohsin



Not a river or canal, as the rickshaw van would suggest, this is a submerged marketplace (Bhairab). — Star photo by Anisur Rahman



Desperate bid to pump out the water sipping through barrier on to the road (Demra). — Star photo by Amran Hossain



Bid to check further inundation of submerged areas water is constantly pumped out over the protection embankment (Mirpur). — Star photo by Anisur Rahman

## Rovering in Bangladesh: An Inner View

## Commercials 'Commodifying Women' Come Under Scrutiny

SCOUTING, the very name of the organization is a movement directed to transform the adolescent and the youth into good citizens by means of their physical, mental and spiritual development. The founder of this movement Lord Baden Powell formally established it in 1907 for boys of 11 to 16 years in the name of Boy Scouts. In later year, realizing the necessity of the time and seeing devotion of the adolescent and the youth towards Scouting movement, Lord Baden Powell introduced Cub Scouting and Rovers Scouting. At the time of formulating programme for various tiers and groups, he laid much stress on psychological need of the adolescent, youth and adult.

That BP himself was an outstanding social reformer, philosopher and psychologist is clearly understood from his speeches and messages he had delivered on several occasions. He used to say that every man wanted to lead his life with reputation and let the reputation continue even after his death. According to his opinion, actual pleasure and reputation could not be achieved through accumulation of wealth or attainment of success or sensual pleasure in life. For actual pleasure it was necessary for everyone to build up a healthy, strong and stout body so that one could lead an active life even in old age and come to other's help. He added that the means of attaining real happiness was to make other's happy. In keeping with this philosophy of BP, the motto of various steps of Scouting has been cast. It is like this:

Cub: To try our best  
Scout: Be prepared  
Rover: Service

To speak in brief it stands: "We should try our best to always remain ready for service."

Scouting began in undivided Indian Sub-Continent in 1909. The Pakistan Boy Scout Association was founded in Karachi on December 1, 1947 and subsequently on May 22, 1948, the East Bengal Scout Association was established in Dhaka. Then after the liberation of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Boy Scout Samity was formed on 9th April, 1972. The Samity has been officially functioning with effect from December 16, 1971 with the promulgation of

Ordinance No. 111 of the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Boy Scout Samity was recognized as the 105th member of the World Scout Organization on July 01, 1974.

The East Pakistan Scouting particularly Rover Scouting was admirably active during the period of the then Pakistan Scouting. It can be proved from the fact that out of the six awardees of Presidential Awards, five were from East Pakistan.

Scouts particularly the Rover played an outstanding role in the liberation war of Bangladesh. In order to keep pace with the developmental activities of Scouting of the Pakistani time and to strengthen their speed, one historic decision was taken. The Rover Scouts of the newly emerged country held a convention on the 3rd and the 4th April, 1972. The Hon'ble ex-Scout and the then Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed, Cooperative Minister Shamsul Haq and Education Minister Prof Yusuf Ali attended the convention as the guests of honour. The formation of The Bangladesh Rovers Scout Samity under the auspices of the Bangladesh Boy Scout was proposed, and in view of this proposal, a special regional Scouting Samity named "The Bangladesh Rover Scout Samity" came into being under the historic resolution adopted in the first national council held on the 9th April, 1972. As a result of this the Rovers Scouts had an impetus to carry out the banner of Scouting activities under the separate entity of national scout samity. It's quite worthy to mention that such a memorable decision was taken for the first time in Bangladesh.

After attaining separate status, Bangladesh Rover Scouts keeps on progressing rapidly. The number of Rover Scouts and Rover units during this 25 years of Bangladesh is many times higher than that during 25 years of Pakistani period. This will actually prove the speed of development of Rover Scouting movement in Bangladesh. Not only this, the rate of increase in the number of Rover Scouts in Bangladesh is admirably higher than most of the scouting countries of the world. At present the numbers

of Rover units and Rover Scouts stand as 1,044 and 25,056 respectively. The number of Square has not been included in this figure. Their number will not be less than 20,000.

It's not our purpose to stress only the increase in the number of Scouts. It's rather worthy to highlight that the Rovers of our country have been able to draw the attention of the world by means of performing Various

opment projects successfully carried out by our Rovers but for chalking out as well as implementing programmes on scouting activities on sound footing as well.

While only 10 world Rover moots have so far been held since the introduction of Rover Scouts in 1918, 21 Rover moots including seven national Rover moots (with the inclusion of ensuing national Rover moot)

Rover scouts have been organized in all the districts of Bangladesh. The total number of members including all adults in scouting such as Rover Group Committee, District Rover Scout Executive Committee and the Regional Executive Committee stand 38,000.



Rover Scouts of Titumir College taking part in a voluntary blood donation programme.

Scouting activities, services and community development programmes. The successful achievements of Bangladesh Scouts were internationally recognized when, in the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference held in Thailand in 1986, the Rovers of other countries of the region were advised to follow the method adopted by the Bangladesh Rover Scouts. This rare appreciation is meant not only for various social devel-

the Rover regions is only 25 years, but within this period, we have 15 leader trainers, 25 assistant leader trainers, 10 CLT performers and 23 NTC performers in our strong training team.

There is another commendable sector in the region of Bangladesh Rover Scouts. It's our publication section. There is an efficient sub-committee for publication under the able leadership of a renowned educationist and bright star in the arena of publication Dr Ali

Now I like to focus on the organizational matters of the Rover regions. Rover scouts have been organized in all the districts of Bangladesh. The number of Rover units and scouts have already been mentioned. The total number of members of this region including all adults in scouting such as Rover Group Committee, District Rover Scout Executive Committee and the Regional Executive Committee stands at 38,000. The rate of increase in the number of members is commendably higher than that of any other country. But we are not satisfied with this. Though we have been able to introduce one or more Rover Units in most of the colleges of our country, we have not been able to do the same in all the Madrasahs. We have another shortcoming as we could not include the youths in the age of Rovers who do not go to college or university.

There is still another weakness with us. It appears from the statistics of the Rover Scouts that we do not have more than 5 per cent ex-Scouts among them who have been included to the Rover movement as Rover Square. I want to explain this statistics in a round about way. Let us suppose that there is one college as against 10 high schools. It means that approximately 32x10=320 Boy Scouts get themselves admitted to XI class. But we have already mentioned that out of those who get themselves admitted, not even 5 per cent of them are ex-Scouts. I feel it to be very essential to inquire into the reason for such drop-out. There is no denying the fact that it is a serious flaw of ours not being able to encourage the Scouts to enroll them as Rovers in due course. This failure marks the bright prospect of increasing the number of scouts. I deem it very important to ascertain the actual causes of this failure and take subsequent effective steps to solve the problem without further delay. Such appropriate steps would help create congenial environment to fulfil our grand mission of recruiting 10 lac Scouts by the end of the year 2002.

The writer is Secretary, Bangladesh Scouts, Rover Region and Member Secretary, 9th Asia Pacific / 7th Bangladesh Rover Moot.

advertisements, which rely on the female form to catch attention, have now also caught the eye of India's apex organisation for women.

Encouraged by the recent Indian government decision to ban sex phone services, the National Commission for Women (NCW) is contemplating serious measures to contain such "commodification of women".

"In a couple of days the commission would meet to formulate a strategy and a new course of action," NCW member Sayeeda Hameed told *India Abroad News Service*.

"The commission would soon approach the Press Council and write to the Ministry for Information and Broadcasting against such advertisements," NCW legal adviser Padma Seth told IANS. "There is an urgent need for a new enforcement system with stringent code of conduct for the advertisers," she argued.

The commission has already filed a petition in the Delhi High Court against the indecent representation of women in the electronic media, Seth said. The petition was filed in early 1997, she said, alleging that satellite channels were delaying their reply to the court.

Seth said the NCW had already succeeded in nipping in the bud proposals for an adult channel on television. "We are instrumental in getting a stay on the airing of the 21-Seth (satellite) channel for adults," she said.

The NCW is scrutinising the present advertisement code that, it claims, provides enough loopholes for "sexist advertisements". According to Seth, the Press Council should come up with a stringent code for advertisements in the print media. "We are concerned for women and the Press Council of India is the appropriate authority for formulating a new advertisement code. We only want to be consulted once the new code is

"What has a woman got to do with keeping your assets in Swiss banks or selling sanitary ware or cellular phones? This commodifying of woman has got to stop".

prepared."

While several commercials have rankled the commission, it is particularly furious with an advertisement on Swiss lingerie which talks rather suggestively of keeping one's assets under wraps.

Another advertisement for sanitaryware featuring a provocatively dressed woman has also angered the members of the NCW. The woman in the advertisement is sitting on a beach with sanitaryware in the background. "The bathroom fittings is not the only reason why waves love to kiss the shore," the advertisement says.

According to Hameed, over the past 15 years women have been commodified to such an extent that they now appear in ads ranging from that of cockroach repellents, sanitaryware to cellular phones.

"What has a woman got to do with keeping your assets in Swiss banks or selling sanitary ware or cellular phones? It is all very subtle, but the message is very implicit in cell phone ads, for instance. This commodifying of woman has got to stop," she said.

Giving examples, Hameed pointed out that the focus was more on women's body than the product itself. In the case of denim wear, she said, the focus was more on the woman's waistline than on the jeans.

Commenting on ads that portrayed men in scanty attire and used sexist ad lines, Hameed argued: "A man's nudity is never seen in the same way as a woman's. In fact, men love being portrayed as sex objects." However the NCW feels that the final decision has to come from the people. "The ultimate awakening and rejection against the products of such (sexist) advertisements must come from the people," she said. Filing a case in courts and various measures are only part of that mass awareness campaign, she added.

— *India Abroad News Service*

