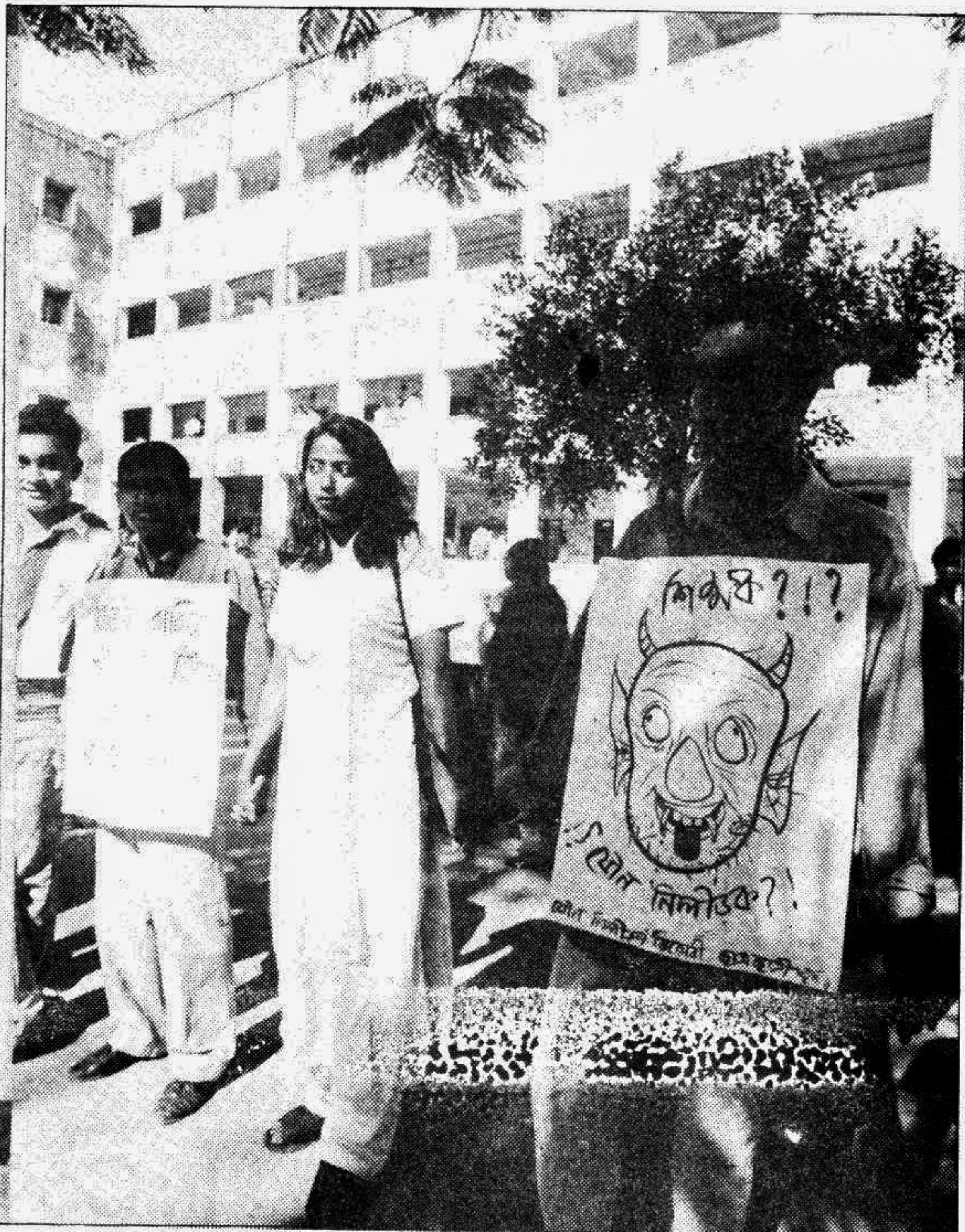


Raising a Voice of Protest Against Sexual Harassment

A photo feature by Zahedul I Khan



Since November last year, the Dhaka University campus has been seething with anger at reports of sexual harassment of female students by some teachers. Enraged students took to the streets to protest the harassment and demand punishment to the guilty. An inquiry committee set up by the DU Syndicate has already found one teacher to be guilty. Others may follow. The photos, taken on the campus recently, show DU students forming human chains, putting up banners, ridiculing offending teachers through caricatures etc., as part of the protest.



No Comfort for Southern Heritage

Parjatan neglects historical sites and natural beauty of the south-west region

From Monojit Kumar Das

MAGURA: Steeped in history and rich in natural beauty, the south-western districts of the country are ideal for development as tourist locations. The rich wildlife and sweeping panorama of the Sundarbans is just one of many natural heritage that could be turned into economic assets through development of tourism. But sheer indifference has left these places neglected for long.

Different places of south-western districts like Khulna, Bagerhat, Jessore, Narail, Magura, Jhenidah, Kushtia, Satkhira, Chuadanga and Meherpur are rich in historical heritage and natural beauty. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), the state-owned tourism company, has neither tried to create new tourist spots nor has it given due attention to the development of the existing places of historical interest.

The Sundarbans, home of the Royal Bengal Tiger is the kingdom of wild life and full of natural beauty. It is rich in wild animals of the cat family, deer, monkey, crocodiles, snakes and different species of fish, birds. It is an environmentalist's paradise with trees such as the Sundari, Keora, Goran etc, creating one of the most picturesque mangrove forests in the world. Yet the BPC fails to pay serious attention to developing the Sundarbans' tourist

potential. Environmental experts say that a lot of foreign exchange could be earned if the government took made arrangement through the BPC to attract foreign tourists.

There are many rich historical places in the south-western region of the country. The great saint Khair Jahan Ali's Shat Gambuj Mosque and famous *dhigri* in Bagherhat, Rabindra Nath Tagore's father-in-law's traditional houses at Dhakhkhindih in Fultala in Khulna district, the great Bengali poet Michael Madhusudan Dutta's birth place at Sagardari on the bank of the Kopotak river at Keshabpur thana of Jessore district, Gaji Kalu Champabati's shrine at Barabazaar in Jhenidah district, Lord Clive's Kuti in Chuadanga district, baul mystic Lalan Fakir's memorial at Cheuri adjacent of Kushtia town, Tagore's *Kutibari* in Shilaidah of Kushtia district, all have rich historical values. These places would attract large number of tourists from both home and abroad if the government developed the necessary infrastructure and communication links, the experts said.

Besides, different historical and traditional places in many parts of the region are being lost due to neglect and indifference of the government.

Sitaramraja's historical palace and other memories at

Muhammadpur thana in Magura district and the legendary Naderchand Ghat on Madhumoti river are becoming dilapidated due to neglect. Some other places of historical interests in the region like the residences of famous mathematician Kali Pada Basu (KP Basu) at Harisankarpur, poet Golam Mostafa at Monoharpur, *Marami Sadhak* Pagla Kanai of Jhenidah district, renowned litterateur Mir Mosharraf Hosain at Lahiripara in Kushtia district are also lying neglected. As a result, all the historical places are threatened with ruination.

The south-western region played a major role in the Liberation War of 1971, and the area carries the physical evidence of the legacy. Baidyanathitola of Meherpur, which was later renamed Mujibnagar, holds a special place in the history of Bangladesh. Two historic events -- the formal declaration of independence and formation of first, provisional government of the people's republic of Bangladesh -- took place at the mango orchard of Baidyanathitola on April 17, 1971.

A memorial dedicated to the momentous events of April 17 adorns the mango orchard of Mujibnagar today. It would be a rich tourist attraction if the BPC made the necessary arrangements for development of the spot. There are many other historical places related of the liberation war in the region.



Entrance to the Mujibnagar Memorial

Pabna Remembers Police Heroes of Liberation War

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA: The Police Shaheed Minar of Pabna, the only liberation war martyrs' memorial in the town, still stands with all pride and glory for the freedom-fighters of this district.

Built two decades back as a homage to Pabna's martyrs in the historic war of liberation, its construction is extremely strong. A great deal of emotion went into the design and construction of the memorial, which was done with maximum possible sincerity and respect.

The Shaheed Memorial for the Police of Pabna, remembers policemen martyred during the nine months of grim battle in 1971. The structure bears names of all the 29 policemen who laid down their lives in the defence of Pabna against the Pakistan occupation army. The list includes 13 officers and 16 constables, whose names are inscribed on four sides of the historic memorial.

The martyred policemen whose names adorn the memorial are:

Mirza Habibur Rahman Beg, Sub-Inspector (home address could not be collected due to lack of records in the office of the Superintendent of Police); Md Mujibul Haque, Sub-Inspector, adjacent to the BM College, Barisal;

Ali Azam Bhuiyan, Sub-Inspector, village Chandi of Brahmanbaria; Touhid Khan, Sub-Inspector, village Kalibari, PS Parbatipur, Dist Dinajpur;

Gias Uddin Pramanik, Sub-Inspector, village Pashehim Bakolodia, PS & Dist Gaibandha;

Sub-Inspector Manatosh Ali of village Dhaukumthi, PS Sherpur, Dist Bogra;

Sub-Inspector Binoy Bhursan Singha of village Manohara, PS Ullapara, Dist Sirajganj;

Assistant Sub-Inspector Md Abdul Jalil of village Pirakhal, PS Ishurdi, dist Pabna;

Assistant Sub-Inspector Anil Kumar Ghosh of Shanti Medical Hall, PS Ullapara, Dist Sirajganj;

Havilder Israil Haque of village Bara Kajli, PS Nagarkanda, Dist-Faridpur;

Havilder Sirajul Islam Siddiqui of village Mailiari, PS Nagarpur, Tangail;

Havilder Rajab Ali of village Noada, PS Shingail, Dhaka;

Naik Abbas Ali of village Gopalpur Katcharipara, PS Pabna;

Constable Sheikh Rahim Uddin of village Gopalpur Pathartala, Pabna;

Constable Hazzat Ali of village Ali Mandal, PS Sreenagar, Munshiganj;

Constable Ashraf Ali of village Jalkandi, PS Kotwali, Mymensingh;

Constable Menhaz Uddin of

village Usharbazar, PS Natore; Constable Hossain Ali of village Bhajandanga, PS Faridpur; Constable Moslem Uddin of village Sheulgari, PS Bogra;

Constable Abul Kashem of village Shalgaria, Pabna;

Constable Abdus Samad address not known;

Constable Iman Ali Mollah of Katcharipara, Pabna;

Constable Laloo Khan, village Kamalapur, Faridpur;

Constable Mohammad Fayez Uddin of village Bhajandanga, PS Kotwali, Faridpur;

Constable Abul Kashem of village Mathura, PS Bogra;

Constable Mohiuddin Sarkar of village Gobindapur, PS Gaibandha;

Constable Yatin Ali of village Mathura, PS Sarishabari, Jamalpur;

Constable Renu Miah of village Phulki, PS Kotiadi, Kishoreganj;

Constable Ramzan Ali of village Shihpur, Mymensingh.

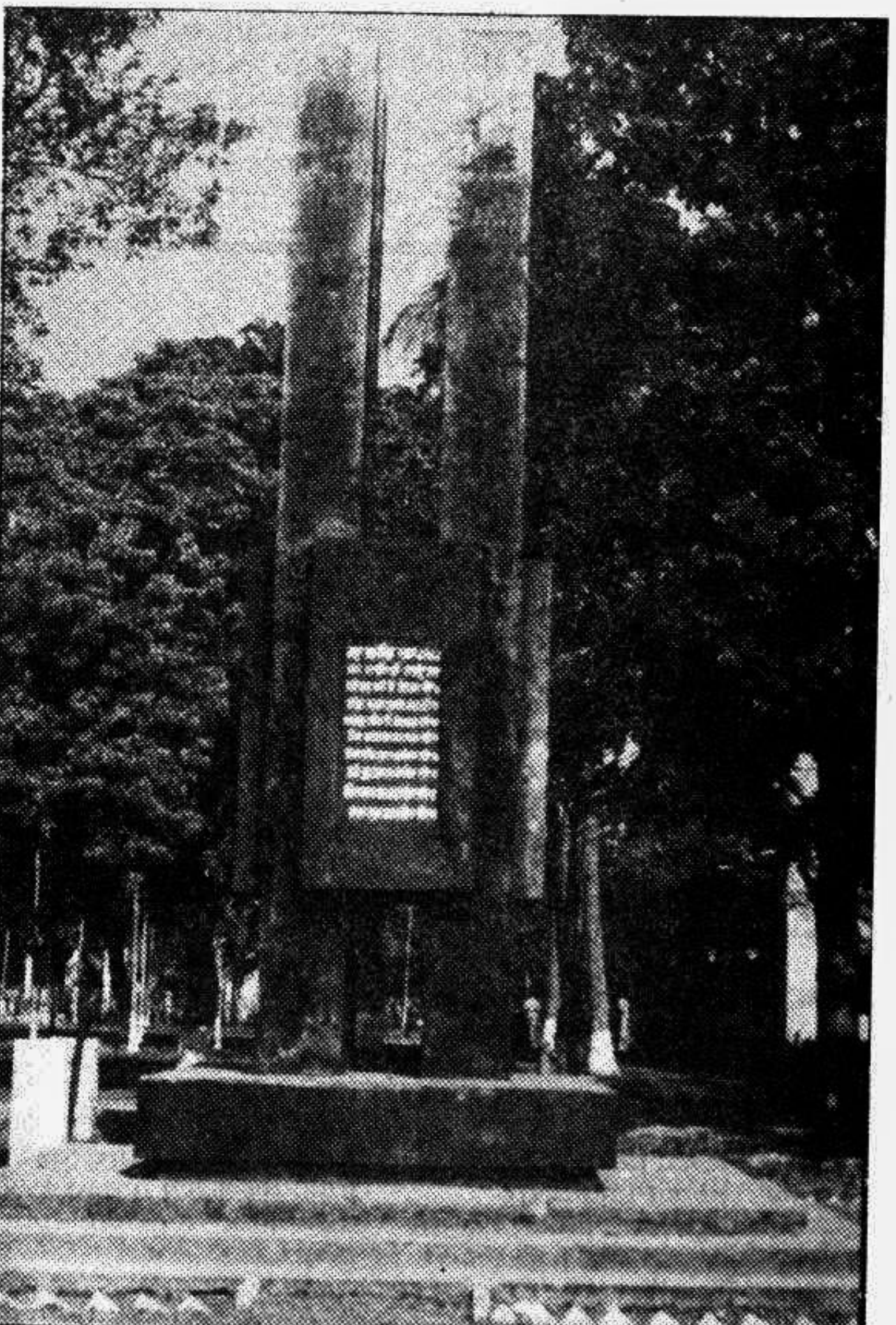
Of these 29 martyred policemen, only five were sons of

Pabna while two were from Sirajganj, one from Brahmanbaria, one from Dinajpur, two from Gaibandha, four from Bogra, one from Natore, four from Faridpur, one from Tangail, one from Dhaka, one from Munshiganj, one from Kishoreganj.

The home addresses of two other martyred policemen, Sub-Inspector Mirza Habibur Rahman Beg and Constable Abdus Samad could not unfortunately be traced. Their pension files were not available at the office of the superintendent of police, Pabna.

The 24 sons from so many districts around the country then serving in Pabna, died heroic deaths on the soil of this district fighting for liberation.

The people of Pabna remember these patriotic policemen on every year on Dec 16, the Victory Day, along with other martyrs who laid down their lives within Pabna and elsewhere in Bangladesh.



The Shaheed Memorial in Pabna

The Bay's Fish Stock Facing Annihilation

From Abdul Monaem Khan

COX'S BAZAR: The Bangladesh Deep Sea Fishers Association sources have blamed diminishing catch of fish in Bangladesh Economic Zone (BEZ) of the Bay of Bengal as the primary cause of spiraling prices of fish in the markets.

Sea fishes are currently being sold between Taka 80 and Taka 150 while shrimp between Taka 150 and Taka 550 per kg in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong markets. On the other hand, sweet water fishes are sold between Taka 130 and Taka 170 per kg.

A survey conducted a decade back by a foreign company said that the BEZ was rich in sea resources including shrimp and other white fishes. But now the fishing trawlers are returning with almost empty vessels from the high seas.

The situation turned alarming from early 1997 when the total fish catch was around 1,690 metric tons including 890 metric tons of shrimps in February that year. Falling drastically, the catch stood at only 155 metric tons including 88 metric tons of shrimp in February this year.

Similarly, the catch in March 1997 was 915 metric tons while in the same month of the current year the catch came down to 240 metric tons. The pictures were grimmer from April to June this year.

Some experts have pointed out a set of reasons behind the depletion of fish in the BEZ.

Firstly, random fishing in the past irrespective of size by the shrimp-catchers caused the natural breeding cycle of the fish to be disturbed. These fishermen also dump other fish

into the Bay after collecting the items of their choice. The increase of salinity in the Bay coast adds to the problem. In the winter due to poor flow, rivers fail to carry fishfeed to the sea from the land.

Unauthorised and random fishing by foreign trawlers is another reason behind the fast depletion of fish stock in the Bay. Over-fishing by these intruders has severely affected the breeding cycle of marine life in the waters of the eastern and northern Bay.

Increasing pollution of seawater is another cause of the decline in fish stocks in the Bay. The ships and trawlers frequenting Cox's Bazar and Chittagong port discharge garbage and refuse in the sea unabated. Bangladesh is yet to enforce environment laws against ships polluting seawater.

Farmers Fight Back Effects of the Flood

From Our Own Correspondent

MAGURA: A large number of landless farmers in Sadar, Sirpur, Shalikha and Muhammadpur thanas are taking up massive programme for Transplanted Boro Paddy (T-Boro Paddy) cultivation to cover loss of crops during the Aman season.

The prolonged flood had a devastating effect on the paddy production. The massive pest-attack aggravated the situation further causing the production to fall by 25 to 30 per cent.

A problem faced by the people here is the lack of a proper irrigation system. Farmers under the Ganges Kabadak Project (GKP) told this correspondent that they had to depend on shallow tubewells for irrigation water as the authority of GPK could not supply irrigation water in the Boro paddy plants. According to them, poor production was partly because of these shortcomings of the GPK. Reportedly, there is no regu-

larity in the selection of seeds for planting. Farmers choose as they wish without knowing what is good or bad. In fact, the farmers are ignorant about the existence of High Yield Variety (HYV) seeds or other hybrid seeds. They are reliant on their own decisions and choose as they wish.

Due to lack of information and controversy over hybrid seeds, the farmers are skeptical in using them. However, those who have used them, benefitted from it. Agri-experts say that the problem lies in this appropriation of seeds with the wrong kind of fertilisers and soil.

However, the main worry of the farmers, lies in the supply of irrigation water, without which all their venture will turn out fruitless. They appeal to the Agriculture Department to take steps for continuous irrigation water and keeping them in touch with new innovations in the agriculture sector.