

News snaps

Seed crisis hits jute farming

MADARIPUR, Sept 7: Jute production here is unlikely to achieve the target this year due to unfavourable weather and seed crisis, reports UNB.

According to local Agriculture office, some 10,668 hectares of land were expected to be brought under jute farming in four thanas here this season. But untimely rainfall caused huge damage to transplanted jute on about 10,085 hectares of land. Local farmers alleged that low quality jute seeds imported from neighbouring India might affect jute output this season. Some growers at Lakshminagar village in Sadar thana said the vagaries of weather — first drought and then flood — have taken their toll on jute cultivation.

12 shop owners fined

CHANDPUR, Sept 7: A mobile court, led by a First Class Magistrate, fined 12 shop owners in the town on charge of swindling shoppers through inaccurate weighing machines on Sunday, reports UNB.

The court conducted the sudden drive in eight jewelry shops, three confectioneries and one rod-cement shop at 3pm and fined the shop owners Tk 1,000 each under the Standard of Weights and Measures Ordinance 1982. They also seized a good number of incorrect measuring machines.

250 schemes to be implemented

MEHERPUR, Sept 7: A total of 250 small schemes under the Test Relief (TR) Programme will be implemented in the two thanas here in the next winter season, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the government allocated 1,598 tons of wheat for execution of the schemes. Work of the schemes included repair and reconstruction of rural roads and embankments and earth-work in different educational institutions. Work will begin by the first week of October.

Massive hemp farming

GAIBANDHA, Sept 7: In a new sign of trouble for the administration, a section of people have embarked on massive hemp cultivation in shoal areas of Phulchhari and Saghata thanas, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the natural cannabis is being cultivated mainly in remote areas of Gabgachhichar, Patilchar, Guabarchar, Haldiachar and Zamirachar of the two thanas. They said a section of villagers process hemp in their houses and supply it to some businessmen in different areas including Tulshighat, Komarpur and Modhupur. Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to crack down on the hemp growers and traders and thus put a lid on drug addiction.

133 women sterilised

BRAHMANBARIA, Sept 7: A total of 133 women have been sterilised in a three-day sterilisation camp at Nasirnagar on August 29-31, reports BSS.

Jointly organised by the Family Planning Department and Merry Stropes Clinic of Brahmanbaria, the camp was inaugurated by Md Mohibul Rahman, Deputy Director of the Family Planning Department. Dr Mahbubur Rahman, a family planning consultant, conducted the operation.

Training on bio-gas

COMILLA, Sept 7: A two-day training course on production and use of bio-gas and organic fertiliser for maintaining environmental balance was held at the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) training centre here on September 1-2, reports BSS.

Dr M Solaiman, Additional Director General of the Bangladesh Academy of Rural Development (BARD) inaugurated the training course as the chief guest. Executive Engineer of the LGED Kazi Mujibur Rahman presided over the function. Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department Abul Hossain Mollah and Project Director of Bio-gas project Swapan Kumar Chakravarty, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Smuggled goods seized

COMILLA, Sept 7: The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized contraband goods worth Taka 7,51,38,997 from different border areas of Comilla, Habiganj, Feni and Sunamganj districts during the last eight months from January 1 to August 31, a BDR source said here, reports BSS.

BDR seized Indian goods worth Taka 7,42,78,000 while being smuggled into Bangladesh and Bangladesh goods worth about Taka 8,60,000 while those were being smuggled out of the country. The goods included saree, sugar, salt, stainless steel, medicine, bicycle parts, phenylsyd syrup, onion and spices.

Six schemes being implemented

CHUDANGA, Sept 7: Work on six schemes taken up by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) under its 'Construction and Reconstruction of Infrastructures on Priority Basis in the Rural Areas including Damage by Flood Programme' is in full swing in the four thanas, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the government sanctioned Taka 38,95,000 for execution of the schemes in the current fiscal. Of the total schemes, one each is in Chuadanga sadar and Damurhuda, and two each are in Alamdanga and Jibannagar. About 60 per cent work has already been completed.

Uplift projects implemented

MANIKGANJ, Sept 7: A total of 230 development projects under Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Programme have been implemented in seven thanas recently, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the government sanctioned 3,231 tons of wheat for implementation of the projects in the last fiscal year. The projects implemented by the Relief and Disaster Management Department included construction and reconstruction of rural roads and earthwork in the premises of educational institutions.

Vegetables farming programme

CHUDANGA, Sept 7: Around 3,100 hectares of land have been brought under vegetables cultivation four thanas in the current summer season, reports BSS.

According to the Agriculture Extension Department, vegetables have been cultivated on 832 hectares in Chuadanga sadar thana, 780 hectares on Alamdanga thana, 950 hectares on Damurhuda thana and 514 hectares on Jibannagar thana. The Agriculture Department has estimated that about 40,000 tons of vegetables including various leafy vegetables would be produced in the current season. 30,000 tons of vegetables have already been produced.

Training for farmers

MADARIPUR, Sept 7: A daylong training course for farmers organised by the Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) was held at local ITDC auditorium on August 30, reports BSS.

A total of 60 farmers from different thanas participated in the training. The participants were imparted training on modern methods of the cultivation of paddy and other crops and protection of crops from various disasters including attacks of pest and harmful insects.

150 Projects under Special TR

CHUDANGA, Sept 7: A total of 150 projects under the Special test relief programme were implemented in four thanas and three pourasabhas here in the last fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the government sanctioned 188 tons of wheat for execution of the projects. Thirty-one projects were implemented in Chuadanga sadar thana, 53 projects in Alamdanga, 29 projects in Damurhuda, 11 projects in Jibannagar, 117 projects in Chuadanga pourashabha, seven projects in Alamdanga pourashabha and two projects were implemented in Darshana pourashabha.

Work progressing

BARISAL, Sept 7: The construction of a 70-metre long bridge over the River Khakdan in Barguna district is in full swing at a cost of Taka 3.50, reports BSS.

According to the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), the Dutch government has provided financial assistance for the construction of the bridge. It will take more than one year to complete the bridge. Communication between Bakerganj thana headquarters and Barguna district headquarters will be easier after completion of construction of the bridge.

Woman commits suicide

SATKHIRA, Sept 7: An elderly woman allegedly committed suicide at Faingri in sadar thana Saturday night, reports UNB. Sources said Katangani, wife of Late Shetal Saha, killed herself following a family feud. A UD case was filed.

Water receding from Gaibandha slowly

Flood hits hard 7 lakh people in Bogra

From A Correspondent

BOGRA, Sept 7: About seven lakh people of Shariakandi, Dhunat Sherpur, Sadar, Shibganj and Sonatola thanas were affected by flood.

District Relief and Rehabilitation Office (DRRO) sources said that, at least six lakh 99 thousand six hundred 65 people of 56 union in six thanas were seriously affected.

Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources said that, more than one lakh hectares of Aman and other seasonal crops were damaged. One thousand kilometers of roads were damaged fully or

are Gaibandha sadar, Fulchhari, Shaghata, Sadullapur and Gobindaganj.

A test tract of land under Gobindaganj thana has been submerged by flood water following development of breaches at two points of Karotoa embankment. About one kilometre area along Gobindaganj — Ghoraghat highway has been submerged by flood water after the breach at Tarafmanu.

Although flood water in Brahmaputra basin is receding gradually, the overall situation is yet to be improved. This time over three lakh people in 30

Purbo Kamanai, Kuthipara, Baniyerjan, Munshipara and Purbapara. One child named Raihan, 3, of village Jogipara under Shaghata thana drowned in flood water.

Meanwhile, part of Sadullapur — Rangpur highway went under knee-deep water after following breach on Jamudanga embankment.

BSS reports: The flood situation in Madaripur district has improved following recession of water of the River Arai Khan, according to the district Flood Information Centre.

According to official

people.

UNB reports: About one kilometre of Shepur-Jamalpur feeder road was devoured at Kulachar by heavy erosion of the River Brahmaputra.

Crop lands and homesteads were being washed away by the strong current of the river rendering hundreds of people homeless and pauper.

The feeder road remained closed to the vehicular traffic since August 17.

Officials of Road and Highways Department said a by-pass was being constructed at a cost of Tk 15 lakh. Work is going on in full swing and the by-pass will be opened to traffic next week.

Another report adds: Poor people marooned by floodwaters in seven thanas of Manikganj district have been facing untold sufferings due to abnormal price-hike of essentials.

At the very beginning of the rainy season, road communications between sadar and other four thanas — Gheor, Daulatpur, Satura and Hari-rampur — were disrupted that resulted in unusual price rise of essentials in the remote rural areas.

Taking advantage of the situation, it was alleged, a section of unscrupulous businessmen and hoarders started stockpiling goods to make windfall profit.

The people living in the low-lying areas of Shibhalaya, Hari-rampur, Gheor and Daulatpur thanas are the worst sufferers.

The local administration has taken necessary steps to distribute relief materials among the flood-affected people of the district.

Deputy Commissioner Mozaharuddin said the administration is always ready to face any calamity in the coming ahead.

In Chapainawabganj, CCDB, a non-government organisation, has taken up a rehabilitation scheme for the last year's flood victims, involving Tk 26 lakh.

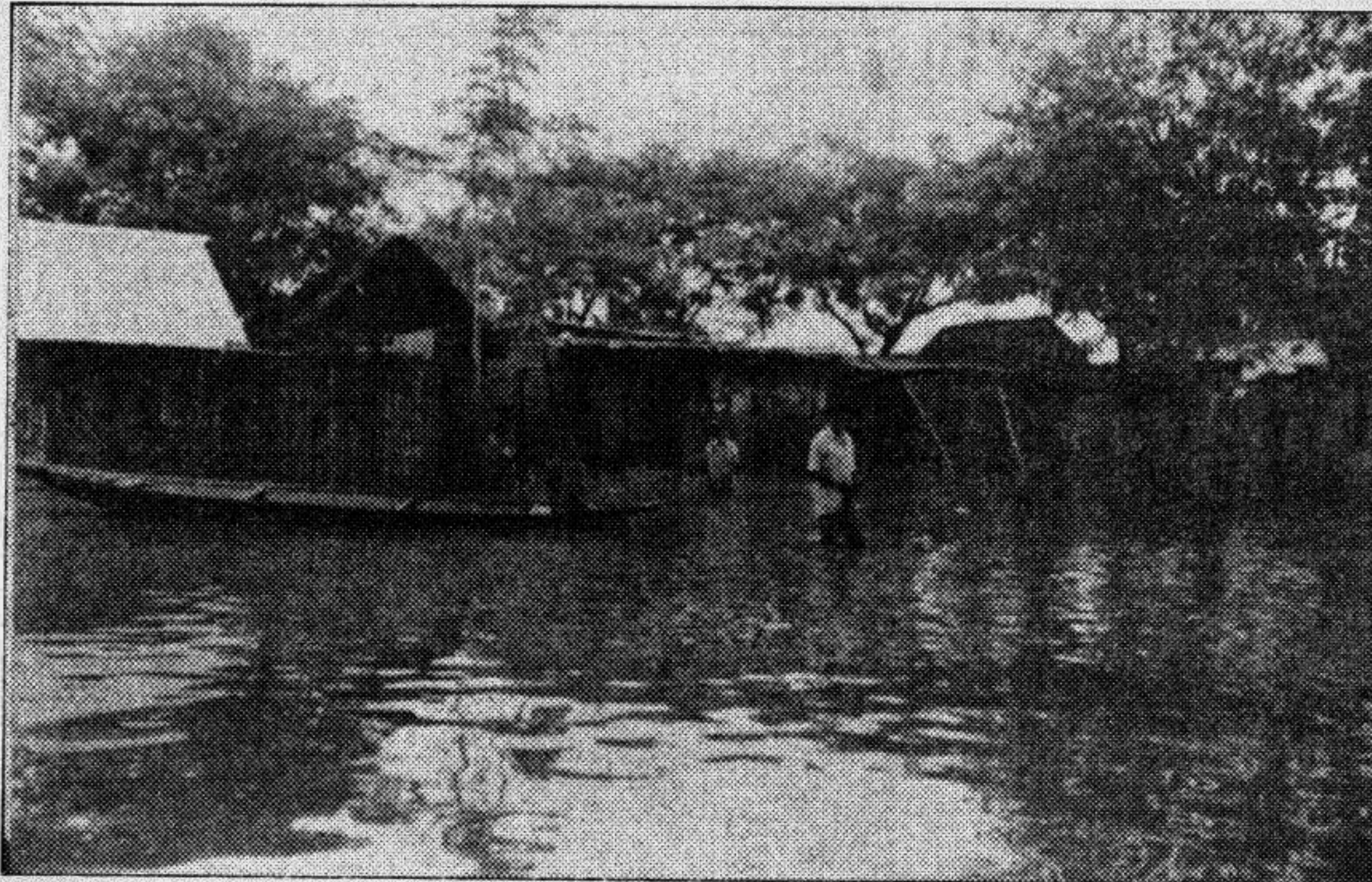
Meanwhile, 2,500 badly affected families in Dariapur, Upor Rajarampur, Shiyala, Haripur, Mahadanga, Chouhaditola, Gabtala, Namoshankarbat, Alinagar and Nayatola areas have been given two bundles of tin and Tk 2,360 each.

CCDB officials said the families, which were partially affected by the devastating flood, have been given Tk 2,500 to 350 each under the programme.

Besides, 1,200 banana trees were distributed among 400 families and Tk 45 to 15,500 people each under its employment generation scheme.

BSS report from Tangail says: Compartmental Pilot Project (CPP), Tangail is repairing its 36-km out of the total 46-km, long embankment known as Karatia Silimpur Road-cum-Embankment at a total cost of taka 2.25 crore. The embankment area was badly damaged during the devastating flood of last year.

According to CPP sources, the embankment required repair on urgent basis after the flood. Wide areas of Tangail sadar and Debarua thanas were saved from the devastation of flood due to this embankment and farmers could produce rice and paddy in 30,000 hectares in the embankment area.



— Star photo



— Star photo

partially in the district. At least 28 bridges and culverts were washed away by flood.

Seven thousand nine hundred eighty eight houses were totally damaged by flood, and erosion by the River Jamuna and Bangali.

Government allocated one lakh fifteen thousand taka and one hundred fifteen metric tons of rice for flood victims of the district during last two weeks.

Our Gaibandha correspondent says: Flood situation is still grave in Gaibandha district. The worst affected thanas

unions under Gaibandha district have been affected by flood. According to the agriculture extension department, the actual damage of standing crops is yet to be ascertained. Flood victims who took shelter in different institutes and on high lands have been suffering for want of food and drinking water. In many shelters no help reached as yet.

Most of the areas of Gaibandha pourasabha have been submerged by flood water. The areas are David Copata, Bridge Road, Shandherpara, sources, 1,42,543 people belonging to 22,250 families have been affected while 20 per cent roads of Madaripur Pourasabha has gone under one to two feet water. Standing crops including Aus, Aman and jute were partially damaged while 555 houses have been fully damaged and 9,446 houses partially. About 89km roads, 4 km embankment and 4km bridges and culverts were partially damaged.

The district administration distributed, till Saturday, five tons of rice and 200 tins of biscuit among the flood affected

Arsenic continues to contaminate groundwater

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Sept 7: In more bad news for the local people, arsenic continues to contaminate groundwater of the district at an alarming rate, reports UNB.

Sources at LGED said arsenic beyond permissible level has been detected in waters of over 25 per cent shallow and deep tubewells in five thanas of the district.

The worst affected areas are Rajarampur, Nayanshanka, Chanlai, Namoshankarbat,

Hariampur, Durgapur, Islampur, Pathanpara, Shantibagh, Belepukur and Alinagar in the town.

Meanwhile, the authorities have sealed the deep tubewells on the office compounds of the district Civil Surgeon and PHED as those were pumping out arsenic contaminated waters.

Local people alleged that the authorities concerned have failed to take any preventive measures in spite of warning by

foreign experts on several occasions, an allegation turned down by the authorities.

According to the Civil Surgeon Office, the district has 100 arsenic patients, but still there is no report of death due to arsenic poisoning.

The number of arsenic patients would have been much higher if we had not taken any remedial measures, said an official wishing anonymity.

Another report from My-mensingh says: Arsenic beyond

permissible level has been detected in the water of 28 tubewells in two unions of Trishal thana.

Sources said experts conducted a survey on 530 tubewells in the two unions and found arsenic in the water of 28 tubewells.

Rotary Club with the financial assistance of World Bank and Rotary Club of Brisbane West conducted the survey in June and August this year.

They took samples from 204 tubewells in Tailor Union Parishad and detected the presence of arsenic in 11 tubewells.

In Kathal Union Parishad, they took samples from 326 tubewells and found arsenic in the water of 17 tubewells.

They have sealed the arsenic affected tubewells and warned the people not to use their water.

Speedboat capsizes in Kirtankhola

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 7: A speedboat capsized near Iwta floating dock in the river Kirtankhola Tuesday evening in Barisal.

Two persons, Khaled bin Islam and three-year-old girl Rashni, had been missing. Other passengers on board were, however, rescued. One person, Arif bin Islam, was rescued in critical condition.

River traffic police sources said the boat carrying about seven people, capsized when it hit a country boat.

The speedboat passengers, most of them are members of a same family, were on a pleasure trip.

Gopalganj weavers passing hard days

From Alimuzzaman

GOPALGANJ, Sept 7: Weavers in the district are passing hard days due to high prices of weaving equipment and yarn, and dearth of capital.

Weavers said lack of marketing facility is also playing havoc with the industry, upon which about 50 thousand people are dependent in the district.

The weavers, commonly known as *tanti*, make *lungi*, *saree*, *bed-sheet*, *napkin*, *towel*, and *mosquito net*.

Nelokhai, Golabaria, Whathpara, Kong Shoor and Korpara under Gopalganj sadar thana; Polshi, Nazam Kandhi, Tarail, Kasiani and Porampur under Kasiani thana; Tan-grakhola, Lohanda, Bonakgram, Batiakya Mari and Uzani under Muksadpur thana; Gopalpur, Kakkanga, Ghagor, Radhagonj, Mazabari, Kolabari, Honahatu and Pingiri under Kotailpara thana are tra-

ditionally famous areas for handloom articles.

Abdur Rob Sikder, 48, Golgar Mia, 39, Mamun Farazi, 28, Kokya Khatun, 40, and Asma Khatun, 32, of village Nelokhi under Gopalganj sadar thana told this correspondent they are incurring loss every year.

They said the prices of yarn and colour are increasing every year but the prices of their products are not increasing at that rate. Sales proceeds are not satisfactory, they added.

Rafiqul Islam, 23, a weaver of Bandha Bari village under Kotailpara thana, said many weavers in the area have already engaged themselves in rickshaw pulling. Others are contemplating to abandon the occupation.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to improve the condition of the weavers.

Girl raped, killed in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Sept 7: A girl was raped and killed by two young boys in village Sultanpur of Bagha thana recently, reports UNB.

Police and family sources said Rajab and Salam of the same village picked up Salma, 7, daughter of a day-labourer Jamat Uddin. They took her to a nearby sugarcane field and raped and strangled her. The body was then thrown into a ditch.

The residents rescued the body floating in the ditch. They suspected Rajab for the killing and caught hold of him. He was handed over to Lalpur thana.

Police said Rajab confessed the guilt and named Salam, his friend, who was his accomplice in the brutal act.

Rajab and Salam, the two young friends, used to pull rickshaw in the area. Both of them were sent to *hajai*.

Additional Police Super Ni-

bash Chandra Majee visited the village and brought the body of Salma to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Another report from Narsingdi says: Another girl was gang raped by miscreants at village Viti Khankut in Shibpur thana on Thursday night.

Police said Nazmul along with his associates forcibly entered into the house of Srati Mia around midnight and took away his daughter, aged about 10, after beating the family members.

The miscreants took the helpless girl to a nearby bamboo cluster and raped her one after another.

The victim's father lodged a complaint with police under the Women and Children Repression Act.

Police kept the girl in protective jail custody for arranging medical examination.

Events of districts in picture



Transshipment issue: State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir (R) addressing the teachers of Rajshahi University recently at a discussion meeting on transshipment at the university senate hall. Vice-Chancellor Prof Sayeedur Rahman Khan is also seen.



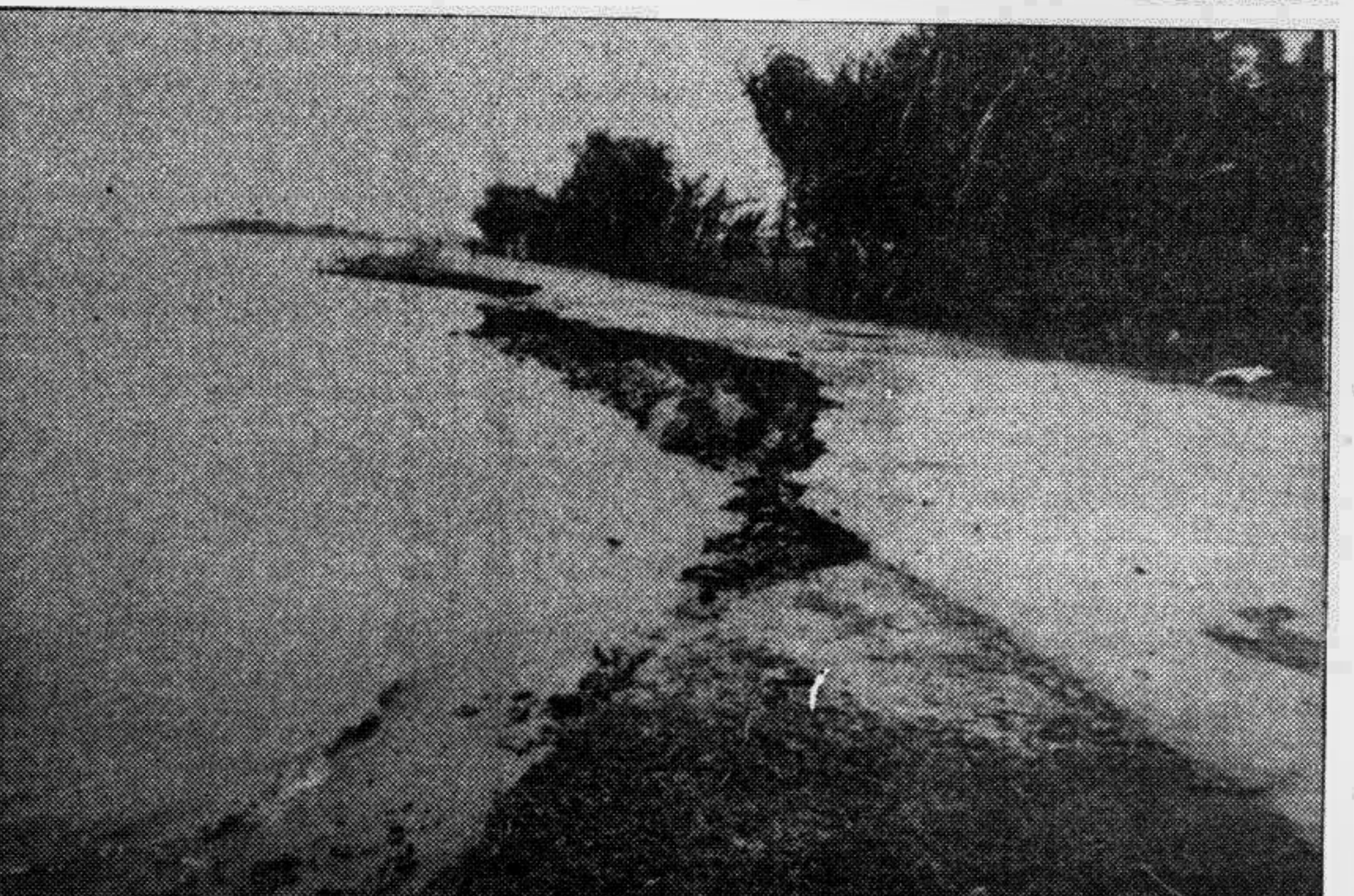
Magura district unit of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) brought out a colourful procession in the town in observance of the party's 21st founding anniversary on September 1.



Students' solidarity, a non-governmental organisation demanded immediate reopening of Chittagong University at a press conference held at a city hotel recently.



A big rally parading the streets of Chandpur town on the occasion of launching of Community Police recently.



Erosion affected Natakhol road in Pabna district. The ferry ghat has been shifted to Nagarbari temporarily due to Jamuna erosion.

— Star photo