

## Floods kill more than 600 people in India

CALCUTTA, India (UPI) — West Bengal state officials Saturday reported more than 600 dead from floods that have ravaged the state the past two weeks and warned that an outbreak of cholera was spreading.

"As many as 217 persons drowned in the past 24 hours, raising the toll to 617, since the floods began 12 days ago," an official spokesman said. "The flood situation in the state has worsened in the past 24 hours because of heavy rainfall that has further swelled rivers in South Bengal.

"At the same time larger volumes of water have been released from reservoirs to keep them from bursting," the spokesman said. "As a result more areas have been flooded."

"Cholera is spreading. We do not have the latest figures on cholera deaths," he reported. The latest official statistics Friday showed 200 people had died and "thousands have been attacked by cholera."

"We are rushing medicine and anti-cholera vaccines to as many areas as possible, but transport is a problem," one official said.

The state is awaiting a response from United Nations agencies to Chief Minister Jyoti Basu's appeal for urgent supplies of anti-cholera vaccines, disinfectants and medicine.

Officials did not comment on a report Friday that thousands of starving people were marching on Calcutta from flooded areas in search of food and shelter.

## Working conditions spur violent Iranian protests

TEHRAN, Iran (UPI) — Police fired on demonstrators in the Caspian sea resort town of Amol Sunday and clashed with angry youths in Tehran and numerous other cities and towns across Iran, reportedly killing several persons and wounding many others.

The violence spread as universities and schools, factories, government offices, post offices and railroads were shut down in a massive public protest against low salaries and poor working conditions.

Thousands of passengers, including religious pilgrims, were stranded for

hours in the desert when striking railroad workers stopped Tehran-bound trains and forced everybody off.

Doctors and nurses in several Tehran hospitals stayed away, causing panic among patients, many of whom returned to their homes.

Iran's national news agency, Pars, and the radio and television network, NIRT, were on strike, too, and news broadcasts were cut.

But reports spoke of clashes between police and militant youths boycotting classes or supporting striking teachers in Tehran during the past 48 hours.



## Protesters threatening longer hunger strike

SEABROOK, N.H. (UPI) — The latest group of demonstrators arrested at the Seabrook nuclear power plant, target of the nation's anti-nuclear forces, vowed Sunday to continue a hunger strike until they are freed without bail.

State police were waiting inside the construction site of the \$2.3 billion plant when protesters edged their way up rope ladders and scaled the fence of the Seabrook plant early Saturday. Later, another 14 demonstrators staged a similar action and state police again were on hand.

Twenty-four of the 42 anti-nuclear demonstrators were arrested, charged with criminal trespass, refused to post bail and began a hunger strike in protest.

They were being held in jail pending as yet unscheduled court hearings, while others were released when they posted bail of \$100 or \$200.

Shelly Kellman, a spokeswoman for the Clamshell Alliance's Boston chapter which organized the protest, said the demonstrators were drinking water but would not eat anything.

## Law students' project led to ERA extension

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Two night law school students in California found a loophole in the enacting language for the Equal Rights Amendment and their research, combined with the political muscle of the National Organization for Women, led to a three-year extension of the deadline to ratify the proposal.

Congress initially imposed a seven-year ratification deadline on the amendment that bans discrimination under the law on the basis of sex. The amendment appeared doomed, three states short of the required 38, until Congress granted the overtime period last week.

Hard-won congressional approval means supporters will now have until June 3, 1982 to win ratification. The old deadline was March 22, 1979.

Catherin Timlin and Alice Bennett, classmates at Whittier College of Law in Los Angeles, were prompted by their legislative law class instructor to determine why a seven-year deadline was necessary.

"It took two weeks of research," Ms. Timlin said during NOW's weekend convention. "There was no reason for it. It could be two years, three years, anything."

"It was put in to please Sam Ervin," the self-described "plain old country lawyer" from North Carolina, senator and chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee insisted that the amendment — which he ultimately opposed — carry a ratification deadline.

"It was just a way to shut up Sam Ervin and make him happy," Ms. Bennett said. "He was a constitutional purist. This (deadline) was strictly procedural. Without the deadline the amendment could be floating around forever."

## Court may decide whooping crane or dam

WHEATLAND, Wyo. (AP) — Proponents of a \$1.6 billion dam and power plant intend to ask a federal appeals court this week to decide if the project should be stopped to protect the nearly extinct American whooping crane.

Environmentalists say the project threatens a flock of about 70 whooping cranes that roosts at the Platte River in central Nebraska on its migratory route from Texas to Canada's Northwest Territory. The dam is to be built on the Laramie River, a tributary of the Platte.

The birds are the only remaining whooping cranes other than a flock of four or five which migrates between Idaho and New Mexico, said John Spinks, chief of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Endangered Species. He said the worldwide

whooping crane population has risen to its current levels from a low in 1939 of just 14 birds.

Judge Warren Urbom of U.S. District Court had ordered a halt to construction of the Grayrocks Dam in central Wyoming.

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