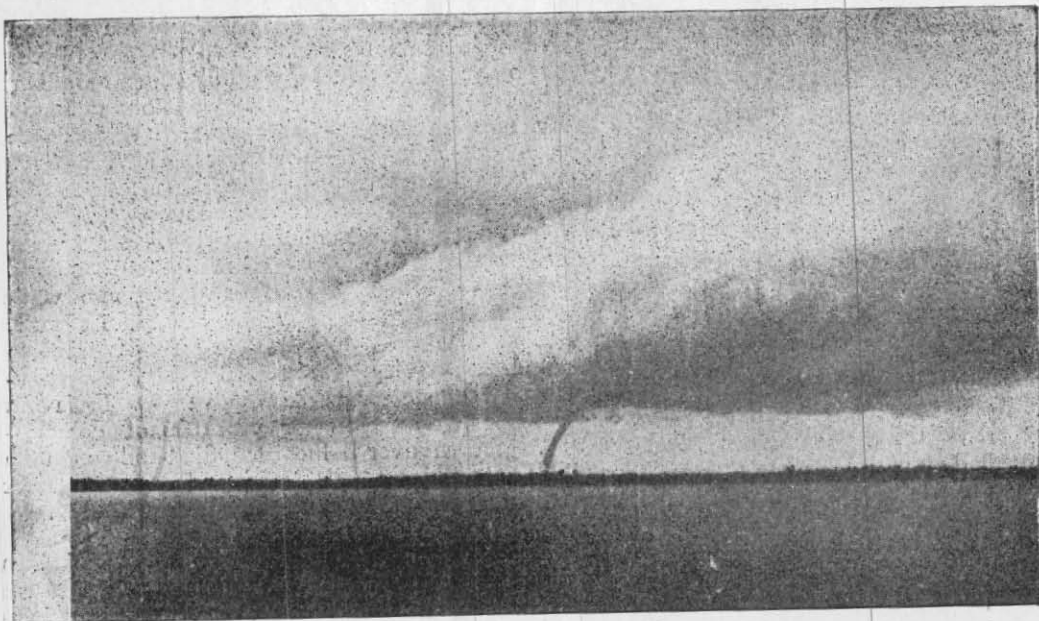


## WATER-SPOUT OR TORNADO CLOUD ?

Water-spouts and Tornado clouds are rare in India. The few instances that are on record have been listed by Chiplonkar in Current Science, Vol. 18, No. 10, pp. 368-370 where he has added the description of one instance observed by him on 26th June 1946 at Dum Dum. The following account adds one more instance to the list.

The photograph reproduced below was taken by Mr. D. C. Mitter, Chief Officer, S. S. Jalayamuna, when the vessel was anchored at Kalpi Road anchorage in the river

Hooghly (Approx. Lat.  $22^{\circ}06'N$ , Long.  $88^{\circ}12'E$ ). The photograph was taken at 17 hrs. I.S.T. on the 10th July, 1949.



According to the Ship's Officer, the phenomenon represented in the photograph lasted for 15 minutes. It was absolutely vertical at first and then bent to one side before disappearing. The photo was taken at the time it began to tilt. It was sighted bearing ENE at about 7 miles from the observer. This places it over land and the ship's officer himself has some doubt as to whether it is a water-spout or some phenomenon over land. The major part of the column would appear to be cloud and hence it is probable that the phenomenon was more in the nature of a tornado cloud. The details of the typical funnel shape are lost probably due to the distance and perspective. Considering, however, the locality and the season, the possibility of at least its lower parts being formed by the sucking of water from a river or creek or submerged land cannot be ruled out.

The weather condition at the time of occurrence of the phenomenon as recorded by the ship's officer was: overcast with low nimbus. Widespread thundershowers occurred on the day in West Bengal and judging from the synoptic situation of the day, the formation of tornado clouds over a restricted area was not improbable. In the absence of further details and in view of the doubts expressed by the ship's officer himself and the distance of the Observer from the place of occurrence of the phenomenon, it is not possible to state definitely whether it was either a water-spout or a tornado cloud.