

# Some innocent villagers were shot dead . . .

From Aroop Talkukder

People of Barisal took breath of relief after long 225 days since Barisal was occupied by the Pakistani Army on 27th April 1971.

Barisal was liberated on December 8, 1971. On 27th April Pak Army through combined operation from land, river and sky captured Barisal town a month after attacking the capital.

Pakistani military convoy marched ahead towards Barisal town along the Barisal-Faridpur highway on April 24. On way to Barisal they faced first resistance at Gownadi, some 26 kilometers from Barisal on April 25 morning by a small group of 20 Freedom Fighters armed with 303 rifles. It was the first resistance against Pak military on way to Barisal by the Freedom Fighters where in a face to face encounter, Freedom Fighters like Syed Abul Hashem, Mokhtar Ali, Alauddin and Parimal were killed.

The Pak Army armed with modern weapons on gunboat proceeded towards Barisal town through river routes were resisted at Junahar near the town. This resistance with two wooden body steamers and a couple of 303 rifles could not stand for a long time, the steamers were later sank.

At the same time Pak paratroopers were dropped at Taltali, a place just outside the town, where some innocent villagers were shot dead.

Capturing Barisal, Pakistani troops set up their headquarters for Barisal zone at the then WAPDA office building (now Water Development Board) in front of the Barisal Medical College Hospital. Later they made bunkers around the office, torture chambers, jail and armory camp.

After the fall of Barisal district headquarters Freedom Fighters who were grouped in one split in smaller groups. The Freedom Fighters formed separate groups in different places of

manders in each thana areas. Mahiuddin Manik, a valiant Freedom Fighter worked as one of his best comrades. Base commanders were also given some modern arms and ammunitions for guerilla operations. Then some brave youngmen from different areas were sent to training camps in India for necessary training particularly on guerilla warfare.

But one time disguised spy of Pak Army and *razakars* albadars informed the Pak Army about the activities of Captain Omar. At the same time Captain Omar also received news of Pak Army's plan for attacking guerilla camps and headquarters. So in no time he shifted the headquarters from Dargabari to Binna in Swarupkathi. Surprisingly the next day Pakistani troops suddenly surrounded and attacked the Barakotha headquarters as well as the entire village. Finding no Freedom Fighters the troops in anger killed many villagers including women and children. At last almost all the houses of the village were set on fire.

In the meantime the Freedom Fighters kept on changing their position of camps.

By this time the Freedom Fighters planned to damage the communications link bridges and to engage the army in guerilla war including capturing arms and ammunition.

In November the Freedom Fighters successfully captured Banari Para thana after several attempts under the leadership of a base commander, Jahangir Bahadur. Uzirpur thana was also recaptured by the Freedom Fighters during that time where about 10 policemen and *razakars* were killed. Swarupkathi thana was also recaptured almost the same way in late November.

On December 6, Bakerganj thana was attacked by Freedom Fighters and fell after a day.



The foundation stone of the 'Muktijodha Milon Kendra' at Barakotha village of Uzirpur.

— Star photo

the district. By that time these small groups of Freedom Fighters had to face both the armed dacoits and the attack from Pak military.

Some of the Freedom Fighters groups of the then greater Barisal district were led by Kuddus Mollah at Mehendiganj, Jafar and Majibar Rahman Talukdar at Bakerganj, Jahangir Bahadur at Swarupkathi, A F M Hemayet Uddin and Haranath Bain (former MP) at Wazirpur, Nizamuddin Ahmed at Gownadi, Benilal Dasgupta and Mahiuddin Manik Bir Pratik at Banaripara, Arab Ali Mia at Dehergati, Abul Kashem, Majid Khan and Wahab Khan at Babuganj, Sultan Master, Ratan Sarif and Abdul Mannan at Kotwali, Siddiqur Rahman at Bhola, Gazi Makim Ali at Nalchity.

From June to August under the leadership of Sarbahara Party chief Comrade Siraj Sikder built resistance against the Pakistani Army at the Guara Garden of Swarupkathi. One day all of a sudden the enemy and the Freedom Fighters were locked in face to face encounter and killed a number of troops there. Sarbahara Party members also fought against the enemy through guerilla warfare: hit and run. But at one stage they quit the area as the Pak Army had stronger forces with more modern arms and ammunition. The greater Barisal district was under the 9th sector command during the Liberation War.

In August Captain Sahajahan (known as Captain Omar) came to Barisal fleeing from the then West Pakistan Army camp. Later he was appointed as the first sub-sector Commander by the then exile Mujibnagar Government. Captain Sahajahan came back along with some of his EPR colleagues and Freedom Fighters trained in India. They also carried some arms and ammunitions with them.

Taking charge as Sub-sector Commander Captain Sahajahan Omar contacted the scattered Freedom Fighter groups and set up the first sub-sector headquarters in a primary school at Dargabari of Barakotha village under Wazirpur thana area of the district on September 6, 1971. Within days Captain Omar appointed base com-

One Mir Mustaque Hossain was killed by the army during the three-day long confrontation and gun battle.

On December 7 some high ranking military and civil officials including *razakars* and *albadars* commanders of Barisal were informed about the fall of Bakerganj thana. Army activities in the town area were geared up. There were some charges in plans.

December 8 was the victory day for the people of Barisal. In the morning military, civil, *razakars* *albadars* chiefs and peace committee members met in a secret meeting in the office of the deputy commissioner. In the morning suddenly curfew was imposed in some areas of the town. And during this curfew hours by noon they left Barisal town heading for Dhaka with two steamers, two gunboats and a passenger launch.

Surprisingly air raids by Indian Air Force was conducted in Barisal at 2 pm. When the news spread that the enemy had left the town people from all walks of life came out on the streets to celebrate their victory. People gathered on the streets and shouted slogans *Joy Bangla*.

In the afternoon Freedom Fighters from different areas of the district entered the town celebrating victory with the people.

As soon as the Freedom Fighters entered the town *razakars* and *albadars* started seeking shelter leaving their arms.

Captain Sahajahan Omar with his men reached Barisal from Padri Shibpur on December 10.

People of Barisal surrounded the enemy in the WAPDA colony till December 15. On that day Nurul Islam Manjor, the then general secretary of district Awami League and civilian chief of the Sector 9 asked the military and their allies to surrender. They surrendered on December 17.

After the independence Captain Sahajahan Omar was awarded the title 'Bir Uttam' while Bir Pratik to Mahiuddin Manik.

## 'Imams can play vital roles'

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Dec 7: The Civil Surgeon, Jessore, Dr Amjad Hossain, said that Imams can play vital role in implementing rural water supply and sanitation programmes.

He was addressing Imams at a workshop held on creating social-awareness about utility of drinking water and the latrine, organised by Jessore Islamic Foundation, funded by Khulna office of UNICEF at Keshabpur in the district on Nov 28. He said that Imams can give advices to those who attend mosques during Juma prayers and any of their advices is easily acceptable to them. He, therefore, urged upon them to explain benefits of this and develop habit accordingly.

Presided over by Deputy Director of Jessore Islamic Foundation, Md Abdur Razzak Molla, attended by Executive Engineer Jessore Public Health Engineering Department Abdul Aziz Molla and Khulna office representative Barkatullah, Khulna Islamic Foundation Deputy Director Mortaza Reza Harun and Director of Addin Hospital, Jessore, Dr Mohiuddin as special guest.

The president, JIF, in his concluding address, explained in details the importance of the programme and requested the Imams to advise people and create awareness among them towards use of tubewell water and water-seal latrine. He added that these two things can go along way to ensure public health.

## Prices of essentials up in Gazipur

GAZIPUR, Dec 7: Prices of essentials are on rise in different markets of the district causing untold suffering to the low income group of people, reports UNB.

Despite budgetary concession for sugar and soyabean oil, prices of these two essential commodities have shot up in the markets.

Prices of rice, vegetables, fish, egg and hen have also registered a sharp rise in all the six thanas.

Sources said in the current week one litre soyabean is being sold at Tk 55 as against Tk 50 a few days before. Soyabean oil of Dhaka Vegetables in four-litre container is now being sold at Tk 200 instead of its normal price Tk 190.

A litre mustard oil is being sold between Tk 64 and Tk 70 as against Tk 56 a week before and one kg sugar is selling at Tk 40 as against Tk 29. Prices of various rice have increased by Tk 20 to Tk 40 per maund.

## Contraband worth Tk 7 lakh seized in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Dec 7: Chittagong port police seized contraband worth about Taka seven lakh and arrested two persons from different areas of the port thana here Saturday, police said, reports BSS.

The contraband seized during the raids included foreign cigarettes, wine and fish-nets.

Two separate cases have been filed with the port police.

# The fierce battle of Kamalpur

From Ratan Chowdhury

SHERPUR, Dec 7: On this day (December 7) northern front (sector No 11) was freed from Pakistani occupation forces following their crushing defeat following a fierce fight of Kamalpur against the offensive launched by Allied Forces comprising Freedom Fighters and Indian forces. The battle of this sector continued for three days. It started on December 2 and achieved victory after five days on December 7 in the morning at 2:00 am.

According to veteran Freedom Fighter Md Mukhtejur Rahman Himu, Abdul Wadud Odu, Imdadul Haq Nilu, Md Habibur Rahman Fanu, Colonel Arif (now lecturer in Sherpur Girls College), Md Hazrat Ali, Odhir Chandra Das, Abu Bakor (now District Unit Commander), Muazzem Hossain Lichu, A S M Nurul Islam Heru, Muk-sid Ali, Md Zinnath Ali, Md Muazzem Hossain Suruz, Md Abul Kashim, Md Matlur Rahman Lebu, Muksedur Rahman Masud and Md Muzammel Haq Mullah a fierce battle was fought. Troops on both sides fought face to face.

Total Bangladesh was divided into eleven sectors. Dhania-Kamalpur border belt was very important for both the sides because there was no natural hindrance for the land forces.

The Muktibahini's command in this sector was led by Col Abu Taher who lost one of his legs in the battle. After his injury it was led by Squadron Leader Hamidullah Khan till the end of the fighting.

Sherpur and Jamalpur was one of the sectors among eleven which had to face some of the strongest attacks from the enemy, during the nine months Liberation War for independence. There were hundreds of incidents of face to face fighting between the valiant Freedom Fighters and Pakistani Army where hundreds of people were killed.

On November 24 the enemy forces gathered 52 local leaders in Surjadi Bazar and shot them to death.

On the night of December 6, the Indian para troopers landed on Kambapur near Jhenai Bridge and Sharipur.

The Dacca-Jamalpur road was barricaded by the forces of Bagha Kader Siddiqui.

At the end of the struggle, on December 7, the Supreme Commander of the Indian

Dr Akhtaruzzaman, 'Abdul Mazid, Mozammel Haque, Pandit Fasilur Rahman, Md Golam Mostafa, Khondaker Mujibur Rahman and Advocate Habibur Rahman.

Moscow, Akashbani etc. were present for interviewing the Supreme Commander Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora. A journalist asked Aurora, "How long will you take to get the Allied



The Supreme Commander of the Allied forces Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora landed here for the first time in this municipal park in Sherpur by helicopter on December 7 at 10:30 am.

forces, Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora landed at the municipality park of Sherpur for the first time. A 6-member committee to receive Aurora was formed the committee member were

On this day, Bangladesh flag was hoisted for the first time by the people of the district of Sherpur.

The representatives of BBC, Voice of America, Radio

Forces to Dacca?" In reply, Aurora said that it might take 7 days. He reached Dacca within due time and on 16 December he brought final victory by defeating Pakistani Army.



The Indian forces after landing in Sherpur took shelter and made camp here inside this building now GKPM High School.

— Star photo

## Shahbazpur pourashava lacks civic amenities

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 7: The residents of Shahbazpur thana headquarters lack civic amenities even after upgradation to pourashava in 1989.

It is gathered that Shahbazpur municipality was declared in 1989 with three wards comprising of 60,000 inhabitants. Most of the roads are narrow and having cracks and potholes developed all over. Rain water remains stagnant and the kucha parts of the roads turn muddy and slippery. The drainage system of the area is in deplorable condition too.

The municipal area has no water supply system. A source said that a plan to supply water was submitted to the authority concerned in 1991 but no measures were taken yet. The number of tubewells are inadequate and the dwellers are in

scarcity of drinking water.

Vast areas under the municipality including Dobaria, Borobel, Parcola, Nalua and Pranonathpura. The number of street lights are also insufficient. Power supply is however regular as the network is under Sirajganj Palli Biddiyut Samity.

The conditions of hats, bazars, hotels and restaurants are unhygienic and threatens public health. The weekly hat of Shahbazpur sits twice a week at the heart of the town on Mondays and Thursdays. Traders from all over the country gather here with merchandise including handloom products, dyes, chemicals and vegetables. The historic Kuthibari area of Poet Rabindranath Tagore is also occupied by the traders on hat days.

## Sometimes you have to accept life the way it is

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Dec 7: "Man is mere puppet to destiny. It is fate that leads a man to his ultimate goal." These are all

common beliefs. But it is shocking when fate plays havoc with the life of an individual.

Like many other freedom-fighters of the country, Khaibar Ali, 50, a freedom-fighter of village Nowdabash in Panchgachhi union in Kurigram sadar thana is beginning from door to door for survival.

It is gathered that Khaibar Ali joined the Liberation War in 1971 and fought against the Pakistani forces being in Sector-6. During an operation in the war he lost both his eyes in a bomb blast.

Ali now begs from door to door with his daughter to help him.

Khaibar Ali's muscles have become weak but his sunken eyes sometimes glitter when he recalls the glorious days of the Liberation War.



# The enemy was forced to retreat from Satkhira

Abu Ahmed writes from Satkhira.

Dec 7: The 6th and 7th December are two red letter days in our history of Liberation War.

On December 6 the Pak occupation army were forced to retreat from Satkhira due to heavy resistance build up by the Freedom Fighters and the very next day, on December 7, the Freedom Fighters marched into the Satkhira town triumphantly and hoisted the National Flag of Bangladesh at the Satkhira court premises.

The Muktibahini or the Freedom Fighters had to fight valiantly many battles in which they sacrificed their lives for the cause of independence.

It was on April 19, 1971. As soon as the sun set, the Pak Army entered into Satkhira town through Jessore road and took shelter in the town high school building. In the meantime, fighting spread through out the country side. It was thought by many that Pak Army would not attack the border town of Satkhira and considering Satkhira a safer place, many people from different areas of the country in fear of life, had taken shelter in Satkhira.

On the following day the Pak Army attacked and killed about 1500 innocent people who took shelter in the town high school building and buried them in mass-graves in the residential area of Dinesh Karmakar, near the school. On the following night the Pak Army in collaboration with their local agents chalked out their plans for future offences.

The next morning the enemy blew up the house of Kazi of Kachari Para by charging dynamite and later killed Kazi Mosur Ahmed (Captain Kazi) along with his brother-in-law by charging beyond. Kazi Mosur Ahmed was one of the chief organisers of Freedom fighting in Satkhira. After some days of Kazi's death, the enemy opened fire indiscriminately on a large number of people who, in fear of life were fleeing to India. Over two thousand people, most of them children and women met the tragic end of their lives near Jhhowdanga Bazar in Satkhira sadar town. The massacre was a sad one indeed. In the meantime Freedom Fighters were being organised to build resistance against any attack of the enemy.

From the first week of March preparations were going on for the armed struggle against the Pak regime in Satkhira. National Assembly being postponed on March 1, 1971, thousand of people of Satkhira came on the streets to protest president Eyahia Khan's announcement.

A big procession was brought out here on March 3 and while processionists parading the main streets of the town

Matiar Rahman and Atiar Rahman who were the supporters of Pak regime, opened fire on the procession from their residence 'Chapra Lodge'. As a result Abdur Razzak, a rickshaw puller was killed on the spot and many others were wounded. The first Shahid Abdur Razzak was buried at the Childrens Park. Later the Childrens Park was renamed after his name, Shahid Abdur Razzak Park.

On March 5, Swadhin Bangla Chhatra Sangram Parishad was formed here in Satkhira after Abdur Razzak was killed. Students league leader Mustafizur Rahman Jahangir and Kamrul Islam Khan were elected president and general



The grave of Abdur Razzak at Abdur Razzak Park in Satkhira.

— Star photo

secretary respectively. The other members of sangram parishad were: Nazmul Abedin, Enamul Haque, Ershad Khan Hablu, Azibar Rahman, Kismat Hasan, Sk Abu Nasim Moina and Mir Mustaq Ahmed Rabi. Later Sangram Parishad was formed in seven thanas of Satkhira.

On March 8, the portrait of Jinnah was taken off from the SDO's office under the leadership of Sangram Parishad Leader Hablu. The activists of sangram parishad under the leadership of Kamrul Islam Khan hoisted Swadhin Bangla flag at Pucca Pole More of Satkhira town on March 23 in lieu of observing anniversary day of Pakistan like other places of the country.

The students, general people, EPR, ansar and mujahed forces of Satkhira were united and decided to work in favour of freedom struggle of the country. On March 29, Alamgir of Chhatra Sangram Parishad brought down the Pakistani flag from roof of SDO's office. Kamrul Islam Khan hoisted Swadhin Bangla flag instead. The boys of Satkhira collected arms from the local treasury for taking part in the war. April 21 Satkhira town including its adjoining area went under the control of Pak Army and the new chapter of war began. Arrangements of training of the youths were made in different villages of Satkhira. Many local youths went to India for taking war training and collecting arms.

After taking training and collecting arms, they returned to Bangladesh and took part in battle in different areas of Satkhira.

The first face to face fight took place at Bhomra border in Satkhira on May 29. This battle was jointly commanded by Captain Salah Uddin and SDO Mahubur Rahman. This battle was very important to protect the moral of freedom fighters. Though the Pak Army attacked Bhomra Muktibahini Camp being armed with modern weapons, they could not capture the camp area. In this battle, eleven Freedom Fighters including Subedar Samsul Alam sacrificed their lives.

The Satkhira Muktibahini mainly comprised of civilians of the walks of people. A fierce fighting was fought at town Sreepur under Debhata police station under the valiant command of civilian Captain Shahjahan Master.

The enemy troops attacked the Freedom Fighters in a planned way and surrounded the Freedom Fighters in collaboration with the local agents. On this day, a number of brave youths stopped the enemy from marching ahead at the cost of their lives and abled to save the lives of many Freedom fighters, making way of escape for the surrounded Freedom

Fighters. Some Freedom Fighters faced the Pak Army with a few light weapons in the hand. In this battle, 59 Pakistani soldiers were killed. At last the Pak Army retreated suffering heavy casualties. Eight Freedom Fighters including Samsuzzoha Kazar, Nazmul Abedin, Narayan Dhar and Abul Kalam Azad lost their lives in this dreadful battle.

On August 14, 1971 early in the morning, the occupation forces attacked the Muktijodha camp at Gopal Nagar under Shyamnagar thana all of a sudden. Shyamnagar thana had been in control of the Freedom Fighters. Though the Freedom Fighters were surprised by the sudden attack, they were able to organise themselves and faced the enemy in a number of groups. The fight lasted about 5 hours under the leadership of Captain Beg. In this battle five Freedom Fighters including Subedar Elias Ali, Kalam and Abdul Kader lost their lives.

The fight of Keargati under Assassuni thana is worth remembering. On the August 16, the enemy troops opened fire on the Freedom Fighters from the river Keargati and thus a fierce fight was fought between the Freedom Fighters and the Pak Army. In this fight, Freedom Fighters Habib, Shahid and Qudus were abled to save their lives by applying their intelligence. Monoranjan, the main organiser of this battle, lost his life.

In the last week of September, the Muktibahini captured the Kaligonj Rajakar camp. At the same time, a fight was fought between the Freedom Fighters and the Pak Army at Pirojpur under Kaligonj thana. Successful operations of the Freedom Fighters led to the capturing of Chapra from the Pak Army in the first week of November. In this battle 20 unidentified Freedom Fighters lost their lives.

The Satkhira power house fell under a fierce attack of Freedom Fighters on November 30. Freedom Fighters, Sona Miah, Abdullah, Babu, Hablu and others took part in this operation. The power house was completely demolished. Satkhira town was turned into a town of ghosts. The Pak Army lost their morale due to the successful operations.

The Pak Army was further weakened because of the continuous attack by the Freedom Fighters.

In the early hour of the December 6, the enemy left Satkhira. On December 7 the Freedom Fighters in groups from all sides entered Satkhira town in triumphant procession. They hoisted the national flag of Bangladesh at Satkhira court building premises and Satkhira was finally liberated.