



SIRAJGANJ: Production target of aman paddy could not be achieved in the district due to continuous drought. The photo shows the farmers of Tarash thana carrying home paddy. They were happy with whatever they could take home.

— Star photos

Renewed clashes feared in Barisal as *lathials* prepare to claim paddy in charland

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 9: Renewed bloody armed clashes is feared in Chharguria of Mehendiganj thana of Barisal as the *jodars*-backed armed *lathials* and the local farmers still confront each other.

Meanwhile, about three hundred *lathials* with arms from Bhola and a magistrate with police force from Bagerhat police camp tried to reap the paddy of Chharguria but their attempt was foiled as they were resisted by the local villagers and farmers. During the clash 20 to 30 gunshots were exchanged among the farmers, the armed *lathials* and police.

The situation has further deteriorated allegedly follow-

ing a declaration of the local government authority that the paddy of that *char* area will be sold on auction as this *charland* is a *khasland* and naturally owned by the government.

On the other hand, according to farmers, as land revenue taxes are being paid by them so this land cannot be leased out further and the crops cannot be sold in auction. This has been recorded duly, the farmers said. However, the TNO of Mehendiganj ignored all these.

As a result farmers are in a dilemma — first, attack from the armed *lathials* of Bhola and second, TNO's declaration. Farmers in the meantime, are guarding their crops in the

char area round the clock. Meanwhile, 40 police and two magistrates were deputed at the Chatkimara police camp in between Barisal and Bhola districts border line.

In this situation decisions from district administrations are yet to come. When contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Barisal, Abdul Quddus said, decision will be taken according to law. Meanwhile, police force and magistrates have already been sent in the troubled area to normalise the situation.

Divisional Commissioner M A Rashid said, necessary instructions have already been given to the district adminis-

tration to tackle any situation. Law and order situation must be maintained at any cost — he added.

Besides, eleven police camps were set up in different *char* areas of Patuakhali while a list of 160 spotted *lathials* has been prepared also from the Patuakhali district. All district authorities should take this sort of endeavour, sources said.

They also said that district administration should take decision about the ownership of paddy in the disputed *char* area to avert clashes. On Saturday last a group of armed *lathials* swooped on the farmers at Jalirchar of Mehendiganj leaving seven injured.

AIDS awareness week

Preventive measures should be taken at all levels of society

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 9: Controlled sexual behaviour should be followed and following of religious activities can save the people from the clutches of the killer disease like AIDS, since there is no treatment of the disease. It was stated at different discussion meetings, seminars arranged in observance of the World AIDS Day here recently.

A discussion meeting was held at the Sylhet M A G Osmany Medical College with Professor Golam Kibria, Principal of the college in the chair. Professor Nazim Uddin Ahmed, Professor of Pharmacology attended the function as chief guest. He said that, since there is no treatment of the disease, preventive measures be taken at different levels of the society. The people should be educated on sexual behaviour, he said, adding, the people engaged with the medical profession should come forward.

The discussion meeting was also addressed among others by Professor Nurunnahar, Dr Nasiruddin Mollah, Dr A K M Shariful Islam, Dr Abdus Sabur and Dr Shabbir Ahmed.

In his presidential speech, Professor Golam Kibria said an AIDS detecting centre in the Sylhet M A G Osmany Medical College has been functioning satisfactorily urging the people to take the facility of the laboratory in suspected cases. Investigation chances are free of cost, he added.

The weeklong programme styled as 'AIDS Awareness Week' organised by the Health Department was also observed here through different programmes like discussion meetings, seminars, rallies, posters, cultural functions and others.

The Cyclone Group, a local welfare organisation organised

Samad Bachchu, Mukta Begum, Indrani Sen and Syed Nuruzzaman.

Children, juvenile and youth organisation 'Renessa' arranged another seminar. Few more organisations also held discussion meetings in observance of the week and World AIDS Day.

Another report says: A dis-

attended as chief guest.

Professor Afjal Chowdhury, Advocate Azizul Malik Chowdhury, Aftab Chowdhury, Dr Shaminur Rahman district BMA secretary and Mastafa Allama, Dr Shahriar Hossain Chowdhury was the main speaker.

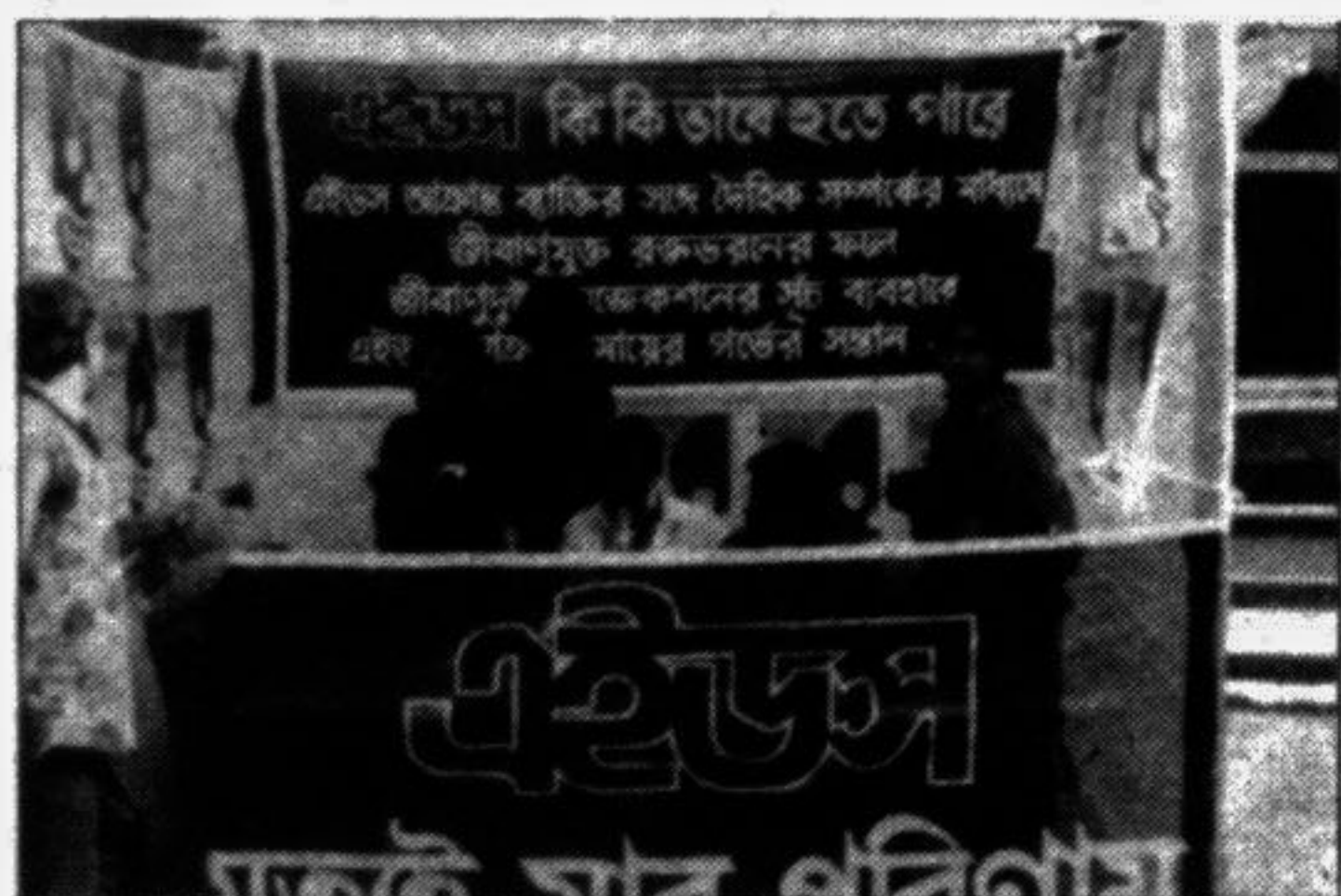
The speakers stressed on the need for creating social awareness about the killer disease.

A social revolution should be launched in the country where drug addiction had crossed extreme point, they said. The speaker also said, otherwise, the future generation would face a great disaster.

Our Staff Correspondent from Barisal adds: To observe the 'World AIDS Day' a week-long programme November 25 concluded here at the Barisal town, a divisional headquarters. The programmes were organised by the AIDS information and awareness publicity committee formed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The weeklong programmes included rally, miking in the streets, poster, distribution of stickers, sticking posters, distribution of leaflets among the common people in and around the town areas.

The two-day long programmes also included 'Jarigan' in front of Aswini Kumar Hall. Slogans about the AIDS awareness.

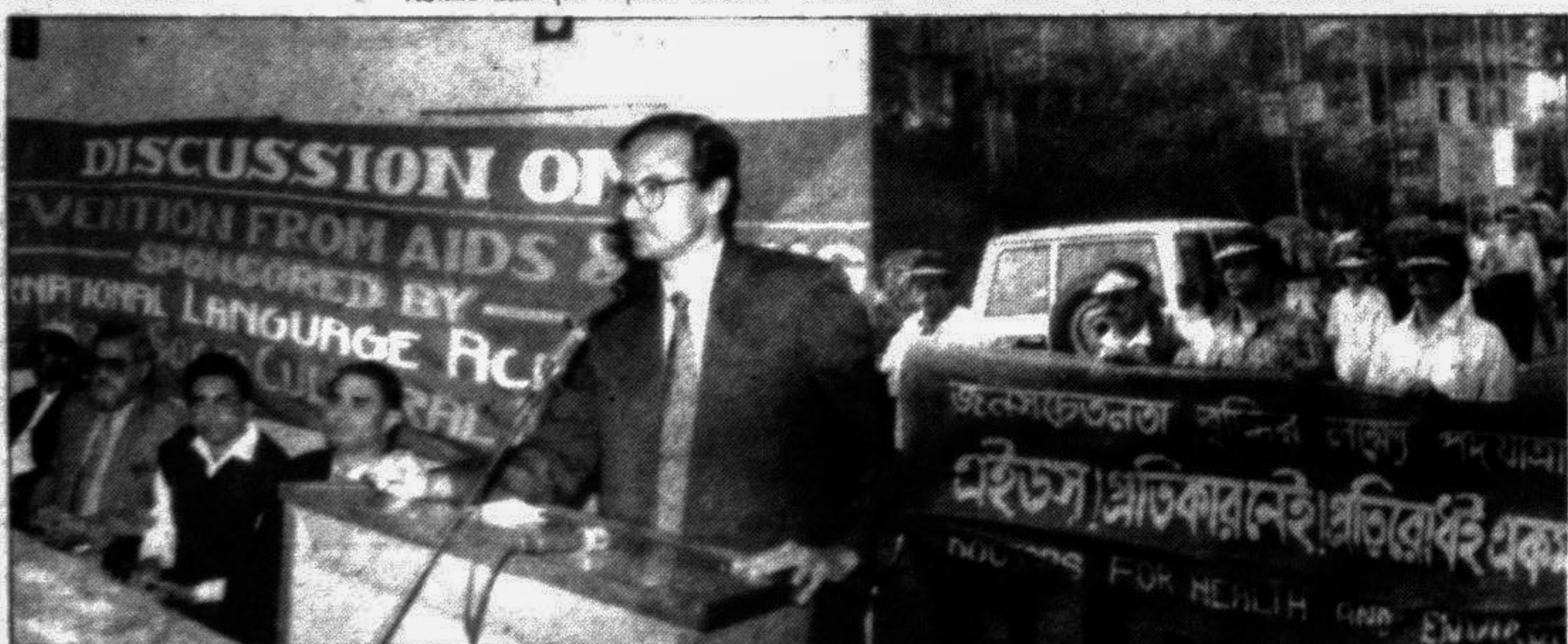


BARISAL: AIDS awareness campaign stall in front of Aswini Kumar Hall at the centre of Barisal town. — Star photo

a discussion meeting styled, 'killer disease AIDS'. Dr Abdullah Al Kafi spoke on the occasion as guest while Haran Kanti Sen presided. The discussion meeting was also addressed among others by, Md Khaleduzzaman, Selim Awal, Moaj Afsar, Iqbal Bahar Sohel, Shafiqur Rahman Shahjahan, Abulhas Sadeque Lapon, Abdus

cussion meeting on 'AIDS and Drug Addiction and its Remedy' was arranged jointly under the auspices of International Language Academy and Free World Socio-Cultural Movement.

Professor Mohammad Shafique presided over the function while Deputy Commissioner Abu Taher Khan



SYLHET: The Deputy Commissioner of the district, Abu Taher Khan speaking as chief guest at a seminar recently on prevention from AIDS and drugs, arranged by the International Language Academy. To create awareness (R) against the killer disease, AIDS a rally was brought out which paraded the main streets of the Sylhet town recently.

Liberation War : Jhalakathi freed on Dec 9

They faced strong resistance

From Aroop Talukdar

The guava garden was destroyed by felling almost all the guava trees. This drive was conducted by the madrasa students of Sarshina, Rajakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams members of different units of Jhalakathi. During that clearing drive hundreds of Pak army-backed supporters let loose a reign of terror killing at least ten thousand innocent people in the area.

December 9: Jhalakathi, the then sub-divisional headquarters (now district headquarters) was free from Pak army atrocities until April 25, 1971. By 26th of April almost all of the greater Barisal district was captured by the Pakistani military. And from that time onward they continued killing, looting, raping and setting fire to houses till their escaping on December 8 and 9, '71. On December 9, '71, Jhalakathi was finally liberated and the Freedom Fighters had their grip over Jhalakathi.

On April 26 Freedom Fighters went out of the town and took shelter in villages — some of them went to India for guerrilla training. The worst time was from May to July when Pak army, Razakar, Al-Shams and Al-Badr atrocities went unabated in the Jhalakathi town and its adjoining areas.

In late July, Sarbahara Party chief Comrade Siraj Sikdar took shelter with his party members at Jhalakathi and Swarupkathi border area of Atghar Kuriana.

There, Siraj Sikdar formed his troops with Sattar, Faruk, Selim Sahnewaz, Mujibul Haq, Mehedi, Selim and many others. A small group of Freedom Fighters was active at Nalchity under the leadership of Syed Nazrul Islam Sahid. Another group with Akkel Ali, Abdus Sattar of Kamakathi and Commander Abdul Haq was also active there.

The enemy attacked the Nalchity thana. But in an odd encounter Freedom Fighters had to retreat and at one stage Akkel Ali was killed and Abul Hossain seriously injured and caught by the Pak army. Later he was sent to Jessore Cantonment. After three months he was released and came back to Barisal. But on October 27 he was again caught by the Razakars who took him to the Kirtankhola river bank and shot him dead.

On May 3 Pakistani army attacked Kirtipasha. Siraj Sikdar on that day shifted his camp from Kirtipasha and set up a small unit camps at Madra, Satadesh Kathi, Ata and Vimruli villages.

In May, about 50 Pak army men with a launch went to Madra where they faced strong resistance by the Sarbahara Party men under the leadership of Sattar and Faruk. After a heavy fighting the Pak army unit fled leaving one of them seriously injured. That ill-fated Pak army personnel was crucified with bamboos to be shown amid the local people.

A contingent of Pakistani troops went to Vimruli village for committing looting and arson. But under the command of Comrade Siraj Sikdar, Faruk, Selim Sahnewaz, Firoj Kabir and others resisted the Pak troops in a guerilla battle and chased them out of the area.

On June 3 Siraj Sikdar met in a meeting with his comrades in Vimruli. In that meeting, among others, Humayun Kabir, Selim Sahnewaz, Biplob, Asad and Majid were present.

In that meeting in an unanimous decision the party's name of 'Purba Bangla Samik Andolan' was changed to 'Purba Banglar Sarbahara Party'.

In June the Pakistani army decided to destroy the vast guava garden of Atghar Kuriana as they believed that all

sub-sector commander, EPR Subedar Abdul Haq was deputed as his Deputy Chief. Area-wise base commanders were Majibul Haq Sarder and Sultan Master in Jhalakathi sadar, Abul Kalam Azad in Rajapur, Sekandar Ali in Nalchity and Subedar M A Jalil in Kathalia.

In October, many Freedom Fighters, trained in India, entered the greater Barisal district and started capturing different thanas and areas from where Pakistani army and their associates were chased out.

The battle between the Pak army and the Freedom Fighters at 'Chachair' village is still well-known as 'Chachair battle' where 24 Pak troops and more than one hundred Razakars were killed.

Subedar Mujibul Haq, Rashid Mollah and many others. The fighting continued from noon until evening. With the night fall some Pak army retreated and took shelter in a half-burnt house in fear. They were later found and killed. In the darkness many of them were also killed while trying to cross a canal.

After the 'battle of Chachair' Pak army troops did not conduct operation during night time in fear. So the nights were for Freedom Fighters.

The 'Chachair battle' according to the people of Jhalakathi, was a milestone during the war of liberation. In that battle the nation lost a valiant Freedom Fighter Md Awal of Kathipara village under Nalchity thana.



JHALAKATHI: The memorial plaque of 'Chachair Battle' of 1971 was unveiled by Halima Begum, mother of Shaheed Md Awal on December 14, 1993.

— Star photo

guerilla warfare is being conducted from the guava garden under the leadership of comrade Siraj Sikdar.

The guava garden was destroyed by felling almost all the guava trees. This drive was conducted by the madrasa students of Sarshina, Rajakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams members of different units of Jhalakathi. During that clearing drive hundreds of Pak army-backed supporters let loose a reign of terror killing at least ten thousand innocent people in the area.

Barisal district was included under sector number-9 which was headed by Major M A Jalil. Captain Shahjahan Omar was

On November 14 the enemy with their support of heavy arms and ammunition attacked the camp of Manpasha school from both, Jhalakathi and Barisal directions. On entering Manpasha they set many houses on fire at a time and ambushed beside the roadside slopes. One Manik, locating the Pakistani troops' position, informed sub-sector Commander Captain Omar. Omar was also following the activities of the Pak army. The battle started. With Omar, there were Jafar, Rafiqul Islam, Badsha, Abdul Haq, Manik, Habib, Halim, Kashem Ali, Sultan, Abdul Hye, Sultan Kazi, Sekandar Ali Master,

On December 6 India recognised the Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh. Thus Indian army directly joined with the Freedom Fighters. One after another thana headquarters particularly in village areas began to fall from the occupation of Pak Army.

On December 7 and 8, our skirts of Jhalakathi were captured by the Freedom Fighters and the Pakistani troops and their followers and associates under cover of curfew tried to flee and went out of the town towards Dhaka on December 9 morning. The people of Jhalakathi were at last freed on that day.

Clash over land dispute leaves 5 hurt

SATKHIRA, Dec 9: Five people were seriously injured in a clash over land dispute at a village in Debbatha thana on Saturday, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the clash erupted while a group equipped with lethal weapons attacked the rival people who were fishing in a shrimp enclosure.

The injured Kenaram Das, Haridasi, Haran Dhali, Sarala and Khuku were rushed to the Sakhipur Hospital.

A case was filed with the police.

He wanted to lead an innocent life

NARSINGDI, Dec 9: A notorious dacoit who wanted to lead an innocent life after giving up dacoity could not save himself from the hands of his former accomplices, says UNB.

According to villagers, Shafiuddin, 35, son of Giasuddin Mollah of village Hatubhanga in Ratpura thana was engaged in dacoity for a long time. Five cases were lodged against him.

But since last one month he gave up robbery and started saying prayers. A few days back he erected a prayer place near the Hatubhanga railway station and started passing the nights saying prayers, the villagers added.

His angry accomplices tried to bring him back to their anti-social activities but failed. According to police, they planned to eliminate him and accordingly they attacked and killed him on November 29.

Next day the villagers found him dead and informed the police. His body was sent to Narayanjanj morgue for post mortem.

Law, order situation in Natore deteriorates

NATORE, Dec 9: Crimes are on rise in the district deteriorating law and order situation in the district day by day, reports UNB.

Taking advantage of the present political crisis, mastans, hoodlums, hijackers, dacoits and smugglers have become active making life and property of the peace-loving people uncertain.

According to police sources, 1141 different crimes were committed this year in the district which is much higher than the previous year.

Of the total crimes, 46 were murders, 178 thefts, 100 smugglings, 25 rapes and 12 highway robberies, the sources said.

Thana-wise breakup of number of crimes committed are: Sadar-376, Shingra-277, Lalpur-231, Baraigram-119, Bagaiyara-74 and Gurudaspur-64.

Besides, 495 unnatural deaths including suicide and road accidents were reported in the district this year.

Moreover, a number of medicine stores and stationery shops are selling liquors without any licence giving rise to anti-social activities while gay girls are creating social problems by spreading venereal diseases among the youths.

Hats and bazars of sadar, Lalpur and Bagaiyara thanas have become dens of smugglers. These markets are flooded with smuggled Indian goods.

According to a source, at least 2000 bicycles are brought every day at Mominpur hat for selling, most of them are stolen and smuggled from India.

Local people urged the concerned authority to take necessary actions to check the increasing crimes in the district.

BKB to give Tk 18 cr as loan in Faridpur

From Our Correspondent

PARIDPUR, Dec 9: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) has fixed a target of Tk 18 crore 96 lakh to be distributed as loan among the farmers through its 23 branches in the district during the fiscal year 1994-95, according to an official source.

The source disclosed that an amount of Tk 5 crore 32 lakh and 45 thousand has so far been lent. Of this amount Tk 4 crore 41 lakh and 23 thousand as crop loan and Tk 91 lakh and 22 thousand as term loan. Crop loan includes loan for cultivation of aman paddy, boro paddy, wheat, potato, ground-nut and vegetables. Term loan is meant

for purchasing cattle-head.

The source also said that a satisfactory trend for taking and repaying loan is marked among the farmers. Up to this time Tk 13 crore 54 lakh has been realised of the loans this year as against Tk 3 crore 11 lakh and 84 thousand this time last year. Last year an amount of only Tk 2 crore 38 lakh and 40 thousand was distributed which is about half the money distributed this year up to this time.

When asked the source also said all the affairs of distribution and realisation of loan are supervised by 66 field workers working under 23-branches of BKB in the district.

Property worth Tk 4 lakh gutted in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Dec 9: Property worth about Tk four lakh was burnt to ashes in a devastating fire at Birghosh ermara village in Melandah thana, police said, says UNB.

According to witnesses, the fire originating from a kitchen on November 27 soon engulfed the adjacent areas and charred 33 tin-shed dwellings rendering 27 families homeless.

The affected people have been passing their days in great hardship in the absence of any relief materials.

In another incident, a cowshed with three cows was burnt to ashes in a fire at Boshpara in sadar on Sunday night.

Housewife killed

NATORE, Dec 9: A housewife was allegedly killed by their driver at Mirpara of the town on Monday night, police said, reports UNB.

The victim Selina Banu, 35, was the wife of businessman Mosharraf Hossain.

According to neighbours, the driver Shahjahan Ali Babu, 30, came to handover the key of their micro-bus at about 12-30 am to Selina. He suddenly entered her room, hit her with a jack on her head and fled away. Husband of the victim was not at home at that time.

Later, on information, police rushed to the spot, found Selina lying unconscious on the floor and sent her to Natore sadar hospital in a critical condition.

She was, later, shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where she succumbed. Police arrested the driver.

The reason behind the murder could not be known immediately.