

Sarbahara build stronghold in Natore, neighbouring districts

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Sept 18: Activities of armed 'Sarbahara' men — the outlawed group were noticed recently at the remote areas of the vast Chalan beel.

Life and security of the rural people has also become uncertain in this regard.

Chalan beel that consists of partly Natore, Rajshahi, Sirajganj, Pabna and Naogaon districts, is generally known to be very peaceful throughout the year except occasional attack by the dacoits.

The dacoits were very active in this region. People of the region still possess licensed guns in their homes being afraid of attacks by dacoits.

According to observers, armed members of Sarbahara group are found in these areas for the last two years. They are circulating their 'ideals' through wall-writings at different places of Sathpukuria, Ayash, Bishash, Tarash and Chatmohar areas. They are also

supplying posters and leaflets for a long in the areas.

The armed members of Sarbahara outlawed group came to Khubjipur village of Gurudashpur thana under Natore district on September 4 midnight.

Witnesses said, about 50 armed Sarbahara men entered into the village by three shallow engine-driven boats and announced their existence by blasting a powerful bomb at Khubjipur. They also paraded a procession chanting slogans like 'Langol, Nouka, Dhaner Shish, Sob Sapr Aki Bish' (Plough, boat, sheaf of paddy, all the snakes carries same poison), 'Sarbahara sob ek hao — police-army astra Nao' (All Sarbahara unite, take the arms of police and army), 'Tathabodhakay Sarkar Dorkar Nai — grihoyuddha dorkar' (Care-taker government is unnecessary, civil war is necessary) etc. They left the

village before dawn after wall-writing and scattering posters throughout the village.

According to the villagers, the Sarbahara men belongs to Siraj-Sikdar group.

Another observer in the beel area said, this armed group had come to Gurudashpur thana many times before.

On 18th June '95, villagers of Badhopara village under Singra thana held two persons claiming themselves as Sarbahara, members and kept them locked at Bishash Union Parishad office. At evening some armed men attacked the office and snatched the two persons away. During chase and counter chase between the villagers and the armed group, Zillur Rahman 22, son of one Mohammad Ali of the village had been killed by bullet-shot.

According to various sources, Sarbahara men of Chalan beel region are now developing their strong-holds at the middle areas of Gurudashpur-Singra thana of Natore, Chatmohar thana of Pabna and Tarash thana of Sirajganj districts. As a result, when any of the district police launch a raid to prevent Sarbahara men, the outlawed group managed to move to other districts and find shelter.

Sometimes, police from the mainland fails to reach any spot of incidents in the remote 'charlands' in absence of mechanised boats. The remote areas of Chatmohar and Tarash thana are also deprived of prompt presence of Law enforcement agencies.

However, Natore police told this correspondent that steps are being taken to intensify patrol in the areas.

People of the areas are now passing their days amid fear and panic as the outlawed group started to show signs of their presence.

'Only public consciousness can remove drug addiction'

From Our Correspondent

TANGAIL Sept 18: The whole of Tangail district has been flooded with phenisyl, a cough syrup, ganja, country made liquor and other contraband drugs. There are about hundred well known spots including the district town where contraband drugs are being sold without any obstruction from any quarter.

A group of people are running their business allegedly in collusion with some corrupt persons of the law enforcing authorities in the law of fixed percentage. The guardians have been pain stricken at the alarming rate of increasing in drug abuses.

Sources said, huge quantity of drug, phenisyl, ganja, beer are being smuggled into Tangail through some recognised channels. Mainly three routes, Aricha-Nagarpur, Bera-Pabna-Charabari ghat, and Sirajganj-Bhulapur ghat are being used as the transit for smuggling.

Sirajganj-Bhulapur route has been left alone in recent time whereas it was a golden heaven as the transit for smugglers only a few days ago. Before the '90, small quantity of phenisyl had been smuggled but recently it may be mentioned here that entire Tangail including local town has been flooded with phenisyl along with other contraband drugs and the demand is increasing every day.

A reliable source said, several illegal ganja plantation projects in the hill areas of Modhupur, Sakhipur, and Mirjapur are being implemented unhindered. Places like Nalua, Kaitala in Sakhipur thana, Gairabat, Kaharta in

Mirjapur thana, Jalehatri, Kakrak and Dhanbari in Modhupur thana, Bolla in Kalihati thana where ganja, cholai liquor and jaao (one kind of wine) are being produced commercially and transported to the different parts of the district.

Six shops for country made liquor and two for foreign wine in six thana sadar of Tangail, Mirjapur, Sakhipur, Gopalpur, Kalihati and Nagarpur are permitted by the competent authority. But at least one hundred shops are selling ganja, country made wine and other contraband drugs illegally, it is learnt. As an example there is no licensed shop in Bhyapur thana but at least ten shops are selling liquor.

It is alleged that phenisyl and other contraband drugs marketed in the town is almost open like common item. At least 30 spots in various parts of the town including Narharmour, Newmarket, College para, Kumudini college gate, old bus stand, Terminal, Thana para, Per Dighulia, Resistry para and many confectioneries, hotels and other shops are well known spots for their retail and whole sell.

Except this, a number of young use rectified spirit for intoxication. A number of homeopathic medicine centres are selling rectified spirit.

The roof of loan office super market, Sovani Bazar, Bhashani hall balcony, model primary school field are being used as safe places for the gathering and taking drugs.

The brothel of the town is well known as a secured golden

heaven for the addicts. The contraband drug traders are usually informed before any raid and they get opportunity to be careful. So the raids are of no use.

Meanwhile, the number of drug addicts is on the rise in the district resulting in further increase in anti-social activities.

Overall condition of the Narcotics and liquor department of Tangail is very much hopeless. Total manpower of this department is only 19. Where as very important eight posts including prosecutor, inspector sub inspector are lying vacant.

The Office Chief Assistant Director Md Bodluzzaman reportedly stays in Dhaka city with family in Dhaka city. Only five sepoys and a clerk manage all official work, it was learnt from a reliable source. It is complained that they have illicit connection with this illegal business.

Office source said that they recovered 3016 litres Jaao (a kind of liquor), 147 litres thibial liquor, 8 kg and 300 grams ganja, 25 lbs rectified spirit, 16 can beer, 8 bottles foreign wine, 66 litres Pochai (one kind of local liquor), 171 ganja plants and 400 ganja made cigarettes during the last 20 months. Office source added 78 cases were filed against 87 persons in different thanas. But they could not recover a single bottle of phenisyl.

While talking to The Daily

Star Assistant Director of Narcotics Control Department Md Bodluzzaman said, "the whole Tangail (especially northern region) has been flooded with liquor and other drugs. But what can we do? We have a poor manpower where eight important posts are vacant. On the other hand, drug smugglers have a strong network, they use microbus, private car and other vehicles but we have no vehicle. Our main problem is that when we send an accused to the court with seized drugs they get bail and then again engaged themselves in the previous business."

They get released due to the absence of proper witnesses. As a result it is difficult to control such a horrible situation. We are like, 'the army without arms'. So only public consciousness can remove drug addiction and build up a drug free society.

Hassan Mahmud Khandakar, SP of Tangail, also admitted the extent of the use of drugs and added the same condition exists all over Bangladesh. He also blamed Narcotics Department for this situation in Tangail and informed that Tangail police will start movement against contraband drug traders very soon.

While talking to the Daily Star, Abdus Sattar Khan, Deputy Commissioner of Tangail blamed Narcotics Department for allowing rise in drug addiction in the district. He also said that he had already told the concerned departments to set up mobile courts if necessary. But nothing has yet been done.

Shabana was rushed to Khulna General Hospital in critical condition, police said.

Erosion intensifies as flood water recedes

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Sept 18: Flood situation in Pabna district has undergone further improvement as flood water in the Padma, Jamuna, Baral, Atrai, Hura-sagar and in all other rivers and tributaries have been receding.

But the people in the affected areas were still acutely suffering from severe water logging in the seven affected thanas, namely, Pabna sadar, Bera, Sujanagar, Ishurdi, Chatmohar, Bhangora and Charpur.

Sometimes, police from the main land fails to reach any spot of incidents in the remote 'charlands' in absence of mechanised boats. The remote areas of Chatmohar and Tarash thana are also deprived of prompt presence of Law enforcement agencies.

However, Natore police told this correspondent that steps are being taken to intensify patrol in the areas.

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sons and 40 families of Sujanagar thana; 30,000 persons and 102 families of Faridpur thana, 700 persons and 88 families of Chatmohar thana; 1,000 persons and 104 families of Bhangora thana; 1200 persons and 130 families of Pabna sadar thana; 600 persons and 80 families of Ishurdi thana and 20,000 persons and 230 families of Santia thana have been badly affected by the flood inundations.

The total number of persons and families thus affected, according to the official assessments made in July stood at 12,011,18 persons and 3706 families.

According to the official assessment, 6873 hectares of land with standing crops were completely and 5,866 hectares were partially damaged till the said month. But due to the third attack of flood during August-September standing crops over a further area of 4,000 acres completely and 5,000 acres partially damaged and destroyed.

The effect of such destruction

being felt immediately in the form of unprecedented short supply of all sorts of vegetables and their abnormally high prices in all the markets throughout Pabna district.

When contacted, the Deputy Commissioner of Pabna, Mohammed Isaque Ali told The Daily Star on Monday noon over telephone that so far 120 metric tons rice, 12 metric tons of wheat, Tk 1,00,000 as cash gratuity money, Tk 5,00,000 towards house-building grant, 100 bundles of CI sheets, 100 pieces of sharee and 100 pieces of lungi have been received and out of the above, 90 metric tons of wheat, 12 metric tons of wheat, Tk 89,000 in cash as gratuities relief, Tk 95,000 towards house-building grant, 100 bundles of CI sheets, 100 pieces of sharee and 100 pieces of lungi have already been distributed. Requisition for more relief materials have been sent, told the Deputy Commissioner.

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