

# Ruling party men frustrate probe into Arnab Das murder

UNB, Satkhira

It is widely believed in Satkhira that bribe and interference by the ruling party men have frustrated investigation into the abduction of an 8-year-old whose body was later found 500 yards from his home to the mortal shock of the parents.

For nine months since the cold-blooded murder of Arnab Das, a student of Class III, the task of investigation has been shifted thrice from thana police to detective police and finally to CID without any progress.

Police said Abdul Mannan, the main accused, could not be interrogated because of obstruction by a ruling party leader and former MP. The plaintiff in the case was also coerced to say Mannan is not guilty.

Police Super Amrul Islam told the news agency that he was aware of the allegation of bribe. "I am looking into the allegation of taking bribe by police officers. If the investigating officers have complicity with the killers, action will be taken against them."

The responsibility of investigation has recently been shifted to CID Inspector Shahjahan. He had not started the work till April 4.

Arnab is the only son of Bimal Krishna Das of village Saibati in Kaliganj upazila. The boy was kidnapped on June 18 last year. His body, with the right arm severed, eyes gouged and acid burn injuries, was left in a drain about 500 yards away from his home after three days of abduction.

Initially, Kaliganj police refused to take the case. On a directive from the higher authority, the case was taken and so far 7 people - Mukul Gazi, Abdul Mannan, Tariqul Islam, Golam Fatah, Daud Misry, Abdur Rahman and Karim Bibi - were arrested. Of them, Golam Fatah secured bail from the High Court and Daud, Rahman and Karim from the lower court.

Bimal Das said he was constantly under threat and pressure from influential quarters to withdraw the case.

Police said Mukul Gazi, 30, of village Khalshani in Assasuni upazila had kidnapped Arnab. On his confessional statement, Abdul Mannan and Tariqul Islam were taken into custody.

Mukul also confessed to the police that he kidnapped Arnab in exchange for Tk 5,000 and handed over the boy to Mannan and Tariqul.

Kaliganj thana OC Rabiul Islam and SI Mamoon first took up investigation into the brutal murder. Within a fortnight, it was widely talked in the area that the accused bribed them Tk 15 lakh to undo the case against them. The allegation quickly reached senior officers who shifted the task of investigation to SI Mamun of Detective Branch.

The task was again shifted to CID Inspector Shaharum Khan. But again allegation of his complicity with the killers and taking of Tk 10 lakh in bribe was raised in a written complaint made by Nishan Chandra Das, uncle of victim Arnab.

On a visit to Saibati village, 6.5 kilometres from Satkhira district town, this correspondent found that Bimal Krishna Das, a wealthy and influential man, is quite popular among both Hindus and Muslims in the village for his charity and help to the poor whenever asked for.

Bimal and the villagers suspect that Arnab was killed out of enmity by quarters envious of his (Bimal) good deeds and popularity.

Bimal has dispute with an influential student leader and nephew of Union Parishad chairman over formation of the managing committee of local high school and lease of Uzirpur ferry terminal.

"Influential quarters have taken side with the killers. They have time and again frustrated investigation to unearth the truth and trial of the killers," lamented Bimal.

"But the killers must be punished so that they never indulge in such brutal act," he said.

# BDR jawan gets 20-yr RI for possessing illegal arms

UNB, Joypurhat

A court in Joypurhat has sentenced a BDR jawan to 20-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) for possessing illegal arms.

According to prosecution, in brief, local people caught red handed BDR member Shahidul Islam with a pipe gun and one round of bullet while he along with his accomplice Humayun Ahmad was snatching money from a man at Battali in Sadar upazila on Joypurhat-Mongalbari Road on June 28, 1998. Humayun, however, managed to flee the scene.

Shahidul who was handed over to police was on leave during the incident, BDR sources said. Later villager Omar Faruq filed a case against the two under arms act and police after investigation submitted charge-sheet against them.

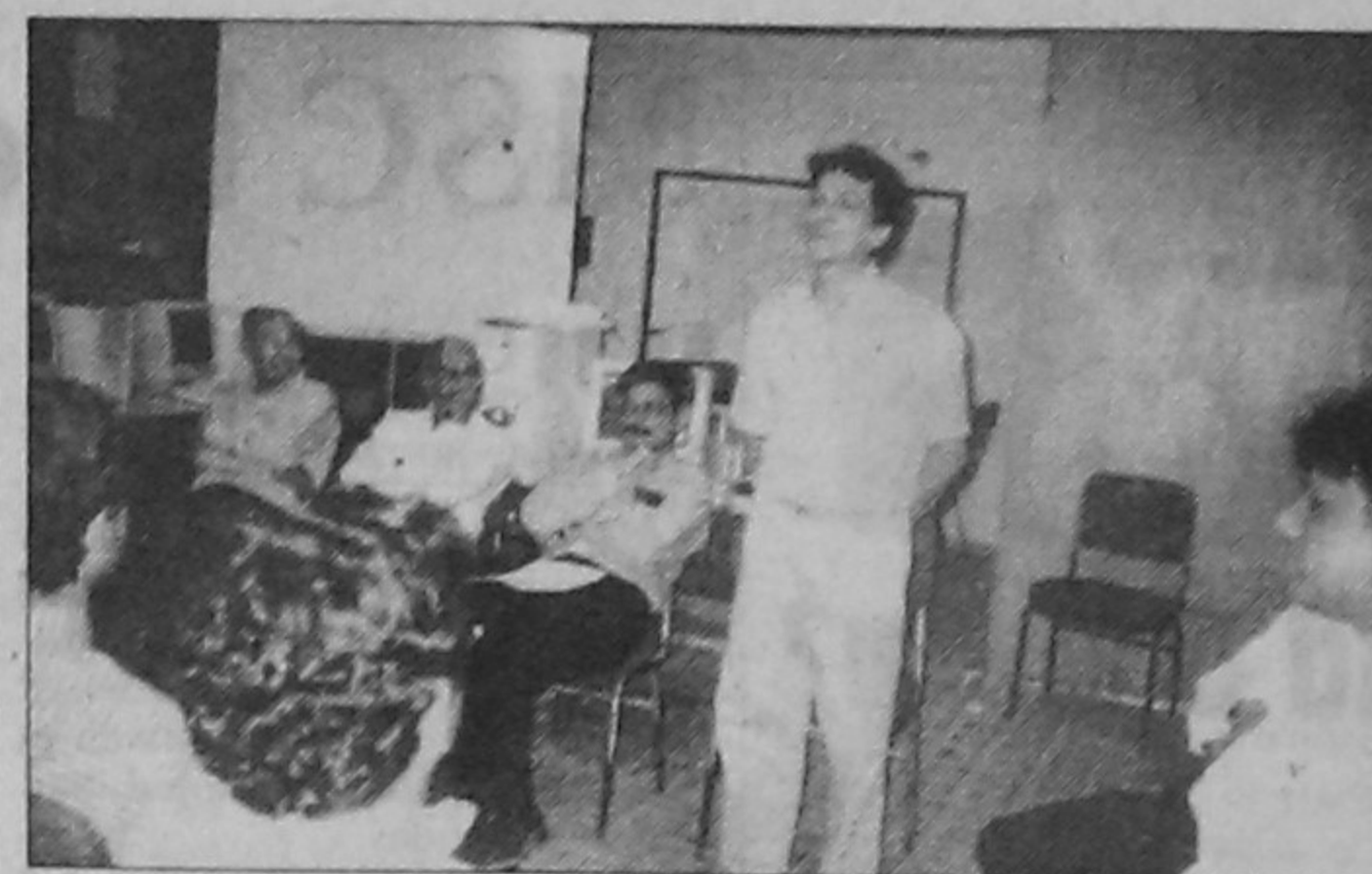
After examining the witnesses and records Special Tribunal Judge Rezaul Islam awarded the punishment acquitting the other accused on April 3.

Another report from Jessore adds: Two courts here have sentenced eight people to life term imprisonment and two others to different terms in three separate murder and arms cases on Tuesday.

The court also fined the life timers Tk 20,000 each, in default, to suffer six years more RI.

According to the prosecution, police acting on secret information arrested Golam Rasul from old Kasba area in the town last year with 56 bottles of phensidyl syrup.

# NEWS SNAPS



Computer Centre of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), Sylhet arranged recently a computer training course. Prof Habibur Rahman, Vice-Chancellor, Dr Zafar Iqbal, Pro VC of the university and trainer of the course Computer Engineer Mohammad Mahub addressed the trainers on the concluding session of the course.

## Diarrhoea breaks out in Nilphamari

BSS, Nilphamari  
Diarrhoea has broken out in an epidemic form in Nilphamari district. According to hospital sources, Babli, 4, daughter of Babul Hossain of village South Rajib of Kishoreganj Upazila, died of diarrhoea on Saturday in Kishoreganj Health Complex. The disease attacked at least 50 people here last week.

## Chimbuk-Thanchhi road work going on

UNB, Bandarban  
Construction work on Chimbuk-Thanchhi road is progressing fast at a cost of Tk 60 crore. Sixteen Engineering Construction Battalion (16 ECB) of Bangladesh Army is implementing the project. Of the total allocation, some Tk 25 crore has already been spent for this purpose.

The project officer said 16 ECB undertook the construction work on the 54-km road after Roads and Highways Department failed to build the road on high hillsides. About 50 per cent work on the road has already been completed and the rest of the work is expected to be completed by 2003.

## Youth allegedly commits suicide

UNB, Kishoreganj  
A youth allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself at his bedroom at Akhrabazar in Kishoreganj Municipality Wednesday. The victim was identified as Nurul Islam alias Murad, 22, a bus helper and son of Selim Reza.

Police said Murad, who got married with his cousin about four months back, took his own life over a family quarrel with his parents. Later on police recovered the body from the spot and sent it to Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. A UD case was filed with police in this connection.

## 487 BNP leaders, workers sued under PSA

UNB, Pabna  
A total of 487 BNP leaders and workers were sued under Public Safety Act (PSA) in Pabna district for their alleged involvement in violent activities during last 60-hour countrywide hartal.

Police said one case was filed with Chatmohar thana against 19 leaders and workers including Chatmohar Municipality BNP president Prof Sultan Mahmud on Monday and another case against 192 with Sujanager thana on Tuesday. Besides, a case was filed under PSA against 100 BNP leaders and workers including former MP Sirajul Islam and two other cases against 176 with Iswardi thana on Sunday.

## Bid to stop carrying passengers illegally

UNB, Sherpur  
Police, in a bid to stop carrying of passengers on goods-carrying trucks, seized six trucks and one tank-lorry on Dhaka-Sherpur Highway in Sherpur on Wednesday. They also arrested drivers and helpers of these vehicles seized from Nakia and Sadar upazilas.

The vehicles were released on the following day as there is no law to keep them confined. The number of accidents on the highway increased due to carrying of passengers on goods-laden vehicles.

## Disabled Day observed

UNB, Rajbari  
National Disabled Day was observed in Rajbari district on Wednesday through holding various programmes. A rally was brought out in the town under the leadership of new woman Deputy Commissioner Razia Begum.

Later, a discussion meeting was held in front of DC office where about 200 disabled people took part. Among others, Prof M Akbar Ali, Abdus Sattar Miah, Shamsun Nahar Chowdhury, Kamrun Nahar Lavi, Humayun Ahmed and Algar Ali spoke on the occasion.

## 50 villages to get electricity

UNB, Narayanganj  
All villages in Baktabali and Alirtek unions in Narayanganj will come under the electricity network of Rural Electrification Board (REB) by the next month.

Unlike the townsmen, inhabitants of some 50 villages in the unions had no access to electricity, although their villages are located near the district town. State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam, addressing a meeting in Baktabali Union Wednesday, told the villagers that they would get power from the next month.

## Fire victims get relief materials

UNB, Panchagarh  
Former minister and BNP leader Jamir Uddin Sirkar MP visited the fire victims of Bodhgon village in Atwari upazila in Panchagarh district on Friday.

He talked to the victims, inquired about their conditions and distributed relief materials among them. Some 127 dwelling houses were burnt to ashes on March 24 in a devastating fire forcing thousands of villagers including children to live under the sky. The government has allocated 2.30 metric tons of rice for the victims. Officials so far distributed only Tk 100 per family.

## Training on vegetable farming

UNB, Shariatpur  
A two-day training programme on vegetable farming was held at Nana upazila council auditorium in Shariatpur recently.

Some 120 farmers from various parts of the upazila took part in the course organised by Agriculture Extension Department (AED). AED experts conducted the training course, aiming to familiarise the growers with modern methods of farming. Another two-day training course on self-employment concluded at the BSCIC office recently. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) organised the workshop participated by some 58 unemployed youths, including girls. After the training, the youths were given loan for undertaking small but income-generating programmes.

## Construction of BAU laboratory starts

UNB, Mymensingh  
Construction work on the central laboratory of Bangladesh Agriculture University (BAU) has started.

BAU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr M Anwarul Islam inaugurated the construction work involving Tk 76 lakh on the 8000 square-foot laboratory on the university campus. Faculty deans and senior teachers of the university were present at the inaugural session.

## New youth training centre in Noakhali

UNB, Noakhali  
With a view to making the unemployed youths self-reliant, a youth training centre has been built at Gabua in Begunjan upazila of Noakhali district at a cost of Tk 3 crore. State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader inaugurated the centre on Saturday.

ADC Monsur Raja Chowdhury, Director General of Youth Development Directorate ASM Shamsul Alam, Project Director Mosharrar Hossain and Awam League leaders Prof Mohammad Hanif and Mahmudur Rahman Belayet were present on the occasion. The youths of greater Noakhali district would be imparted training on income-generating programmes from the next month, official sources said. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of the youth training centre on October 28, 1999.

# 14 killed in Chapainawabganj in three months

UNB, Chapainawabganj

At least 14 persons were killed and 41 injured in separate incidents in Chapainawabganj district during the last three months.

Police sources said while crossing Nababganj-Sona Masjid road a little boy Azizul Huq, 9, was run over by a speeding truck on January 6. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. On Feb 9 an unidentified man was killed and four others were injured at Rasulpur on Nababganj-Shibganj road in a head-on collision between a truck and a 'Mishuk'.

On Feb 17 motor cycle riders Manirul, 32, Mirarul, 10 and Babu, 32, died on the spot when a speeding truck knocked their vehicle near Ercon Company office on Nababganj-Sona Masjid road.

On Feb 24 an unidentified man was killed and 12 others were injured when a passenger bus skidded of the road at Ionakipara on Nababganj-Nachole road.

On February 21 assailants murdered schoolgirl Selina, 13, daughter of Khabiruddin of Gohalbari village in Bholahat upazila. They threw the body into a nearby irrigation canal.

On Feb 28 the hoodlums murdered Fensi, 15, a student of class nine and daughter of Kuddus of village Kalahar in Nachole upazila. On March 13 two persons were killed and five injured when a passenger bus collided head-on with a truck at

Annura on Nababganj-Nachole road.

Ekrumul Huq, 60, of village Ekhalapur in Shibganj upazila was electrocuted on March 17 and on March 22 two little boys Rahim, 12, and Russel, 11, of village Alinaagar in Nababganj town also died when they came in contact with a live electric wire.

On the same day Mishuk passenger Kayes, 30, died on the spot and his wife Sanowara, 18, sustained injuries when a speeding truck hit the vehicle on Nababganj-Sona Masjid road in Konsut area.

Others were injured in separate other accidents during the same period. Separate cases were filed with the police.

# Two killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Two people were killed, 30 others injured in two separate road accidents in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj district on Thursday.

In the first accident, a man was killed when a passenger bus collided with a truck carrying bricks in Zalibagan area in Rajshahi. Driver of the bus, Dulal Hossain, died on the spot. Besides, 30 passengers were injured.

In another accident, Alkash Ali (horu), 40, was killed on the spot when a truck hit him from behind on Chapainawabganj-Sona Masjid Road.

Police seized the truck but the driver managed to escape.

Two separate cases were filed.

# 15 injured as locals clash in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

At least 15 people were injured, five of them critically, in a clash between two rival groups of locals at Alimganj under Rajpara police station in Rajshahi city Friday night.

Some grocery shops, three houses and one clubroom were looted and torched during the clash.

Five seriously injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. They were identified as Masud, 17, Entazul, 22, Alauddin, 35, Selim, 17, and Kamal, 27.

# Four abductors handed over to police

UNB, Kushtia

Local people caught four abductors in Mirpur upazila in Kushtia and after mass beating handed them over to police recently.

Police said that the four youths abducted Ashrafur Islam, 22, at gunpoint from Khas Mahal village in Gangni upazila of Meherpur district and on their way to Kushtia town in a car when they reached Khalsihakandi bazaar in the upazila the victim cried out for help. Apprehending danger the youths left him at the bazaar and drove towards the Kushtia town. But the chasing people blocked the road at Nimtala on Kushtia-Meherpur road and caught the abductors. They were identified as Bipul, 28, of Talajampur, Raju, 25 and Bazlu, 32, of Talajampur in Kushtia town and Toukir, 30, driver of the car. A case was filed.

# She earned wrath of 'sardarni' for saying no to prostitution

UNB, Bogerhat

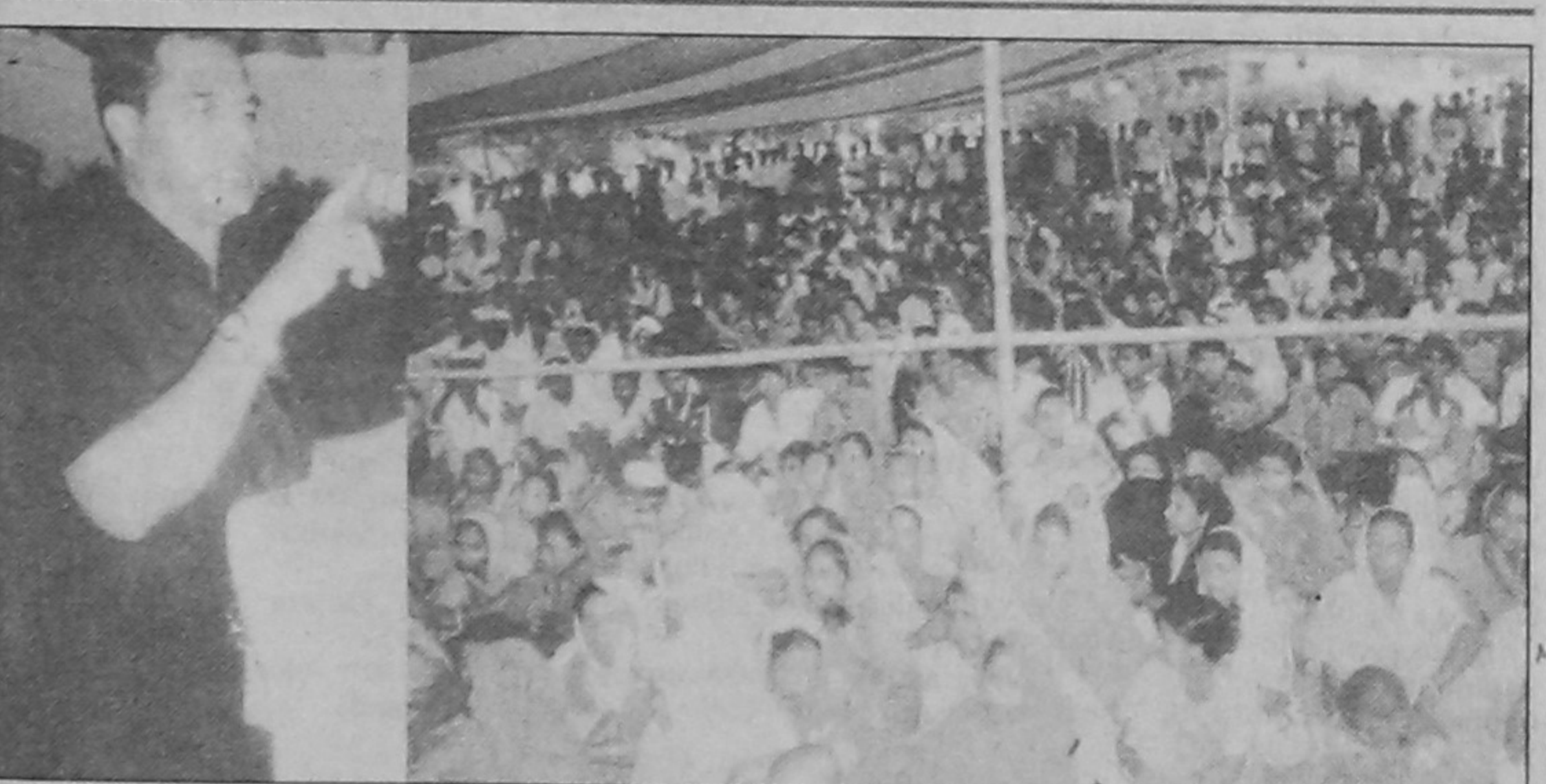
A beautiful young girl, brought to Banishanta sex village opposite Mongla Port, fled to a nearby villager when she realised that she was in for a filthy life.

But hapless Lima, 16, could not stay in hiding inside a tea stall in Christianpara area for long.

Amena, 'sardarni' (madam) of Banishanta sex village, who bought Lima at a high price did not allow her slip out. With the help of Salam Member and Mujibar, she traced out Lima and dragged her to the confinement of the brothel.

Lima refused to become a prostitute and thus earned the wrath of Amena, the all-powerful woman in Banishanta. Annoyed and angry, she set her goals to deal with Lima.

Witnesses requesting anonymity told that on the night of February 6, four young men in a drunken condition entered into the house where Lima was confined.



Veteran freedom fighter Maj Gen (Retd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan addressing a meeting at South Sotanandi village under Daudkandi upazila in Comilla district recently which was arranged by General Bhuiyan Supporters' Forum

# 170 out of 282 families in Shajadpur use sanitary latrines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A local non-government organisation in Sirajganj is about to set unique example by providing hundred per cent coverage in use of sanitary latrines.

Programmes for Peoples Development (PPD), a partner organisation of NGO Forum for Drinking Water and Sanitation covered almost 60 per cent households of Alokdia village in Shajadpur upazila of Sirajganj district with sanitary latrines.

Out of 282 families, it now covers more than 170 families who have opted for using water sealed sanitary latrines in their homes.

"When we set out for the mission of supplying sanitary latrines in the village we got very negative response since people here were used to kutchha toilet. But through our specially designed advocacy programmes we broke the ice especially among those who did not believe in investing money for such an idea that hardly gives any return," said Nazneen Choudhury, Executive Director of PPD.

Showing round the village Nazneen also said, "When we started only 10 to 12 houses had sanitary latrines at the beginning last year."

"I had no latrine. My family used open space for the purpose and we had stinking smell round the year. But since I took the latrine it is now cleaner and better condition," said old man Yahya Khan.

PPD is currently working in many other villages promoting not only sanitary latrines but also hand pumped tube-wells.

PPD started implementing Water and Sanitation programme since early 1990 in co-operation with NGO Forum for Drinking Water and Sanitation.

Under the programme it is supplying cost-effective tube-wells that enables water to draw from 20 to 35 feet deep. Only members of village development committee are eligible for loan between Taka 3,000 and Tk 20,000 on easy terms for purchase of the tube-wells and latrines.

"So far we have disbursed over Taka six crore to our members since 1995 and demand is increasing everyday," said Nazneen.

A poor young farmer in Alokdia village said, "I do not have sufficient money to buy a tube-well but with loans I already bought one which I share with another six neighbouring families."

PPD is executing its activities mainly in Shajadpur and Ullapara upazilas in Sirajganj district and Sherpur upazila in Bogra district. With technical assistance from NGO Forum it has also constructed six arsenic iron removal plants and five rainwater harvesting plants. A total of about 100 families use the facilities.

Each of the iron arsenic removal plant costs about Tk 8,000, twenty per cent of which comes from the beneficiaries and the rest is borne by PPD.

Through such programmes NGO Forum has covered over 86 villages under its WATSAN programme in Bogra region which includes training of over 1,500 local NGO workers and 630 ordinary people of the community and 1,400 caretaker women.



One worker of Uttaran, a Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) distributing sanitary latrine to a flood victim of Shibpur under Sadar upazila in Satkhira district recently. The organisation distributed 2,000 sanitary latrines among the flood affected people of the district.