

# JMB regrouping in Gaibandha

Police on hunt for seven leaders who often visit areas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Militants of banned Islamist outfit Jammatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB) are regrouping in remote areas of Shaghata upazila.

Local people complained that many JMB leaders who went into hiding after proclamation of emergency are often visiting remote villages including Akanderpara, Jumbari, Haldia, Barokona, Jangalia and Basantherpara in Shaghata upazila.

They are inviting people to join JMB and trying to motivate innocent villagers in the name of Jihad to establish 'Islamic rule' in the country.

The JMB cadres also are collecting tolls on the plea of establishing Islamic rules through Jihad.

Talking to this correspondent during several visits to the area recently, some said the militants call him Kafir if any body declines to listen to them.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-5 (Joypurhar) unit in a drive

arrested two Ehsar members of JMB Wazed Ali and Abdur Rob from Bashantherpara village on November 11.

Rab sources said the arrestees told them that Islamist militants are working in different remote areas including Bashantherpara, where some senior members have been assigned to collect tolls and recruit members.

Bashantherpara was JMB den before arrest of JMB kingpin Abdur Rahman and second-in-command Siddiqui Islam (Bangla Bhai). After arrest of top leaders, the local leaders fled away from the area but are regrouping again in different areas of Shaghata upazila.

Rab also arrested woman JMB member Ambia Begum, 50, on December 23 from her house at Jangalia village in the upazila and recovered huge quantities of Jihad books and leaflets. Her three sons -- Anas, 26, Mukul, 23, and Bulbul, 20 -- are also activists of JMB. But they managed to flee during the raid.

Acting on a tip-off, Gaibandha Sadar police on October 28

arrested six militants including its leader Manjil Hossain, 55, of banned Islamist outfit Allaher Dal while they were holding a meeting at Kachuer Khamar village in the Saderupazila.

Police also recovered Jihad books and papers from the spot.

All the six militants confessed to police that they were active members of Allaher Dal, led by Matin Mehdi. Allardal is an outfit of JMB.

Matin Mehdi was sentenced to death for militant activities. Police said, they gathered in the house of Manjil Hossain for a regular meeting, held almost every day.

Local commander of Allaher Dal Manjil Hossain, earlier arrested by police, was released on bail.

Allaher Dal chief Matin Mehdi was arrested last year in Kurigram. He is accused in several cases relating to militant activities in Gaibandha, Bogra and Jhenaidha.

Police said they are hunting for at least seven JMB leaders in Shaghata upazila and adjoining areas.

## CRISIS OF VESSELS

Jute export thru' Mongla port hampered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Export of raw jute through Mongla port is being hampered due to crisis of sea-going vessels.

Sources in Bangladesh Jute Exporters' Association (BJEA) said 35,000 metric tonnes of jute worth Tk 10 crore could not be exported due to lack of sea-going vessels for the last three-and-a-half months.

About 40,000 metric tonnes of raw jute stored in warehouses of 18 jute exporters are yet to be exported despite opening of LCs much earlier, BJEA sources said. Crisis of ship will also hinder foreign exchange earning.

Foreign buyers will not be interested to buy raw jute from our exporters, said managing director (MD) of FR Jute Sharif Fazlur Rahman.

'We are trying our level best to find out an alternative way to export raw jute to retain our foreign buyers and save our business from being ruined', said Shahnewaz Jute Bailing Ltd executive director (ED). He also termed this as an international conspiracy to ruin the prospective industry.

FR Jute Limited Company general manager Rangalal Saha said the cost of export of jute through Chittagong sea port is much higher than that of Mongla port. But, jute exporters in Khulna have to wait for a long time for ship at Mongla, said Rangalal Saha.

When contacted, Alim Hossain, divisional MD of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation expressed his inability as 'all 13 ships are now at different parts of the world,' he said. Mongla Port Authority chairman blamed the inefficiency of shipping agents for the crisis.

2 killed in Sylhet clashes over land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Two persons were killed and 20 others injured in separate clashes over land disputes in Fenchuganj upazila of Sylhet and in Jagannathpur upazila of Sunamganj district yesterday.

One of the injured persons--Mokoddos Miah--was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Police arrested three persons after the clash in Jagannathpur.

Ripon Miah, 25, died on the spot in the clash centring construction of a structure on a disputed land at Ikorchoi in Jagannathpur municipal area.

Fifteen others belonging to both the factions were injured in the clash.

Rest of the injured were taken to the upazila health complex. One Azizur Rahman filed a case with the Jagannathpur police station in this connection.

Police sent the body of Ripon to Sunamganj morgue for autopsy.

In the other incident, one Suruj Ali, 50, died on the spot at Manikkona village in Fenchuganj. The clash took place over demarcation of boundary of house.

Stipend for bright students

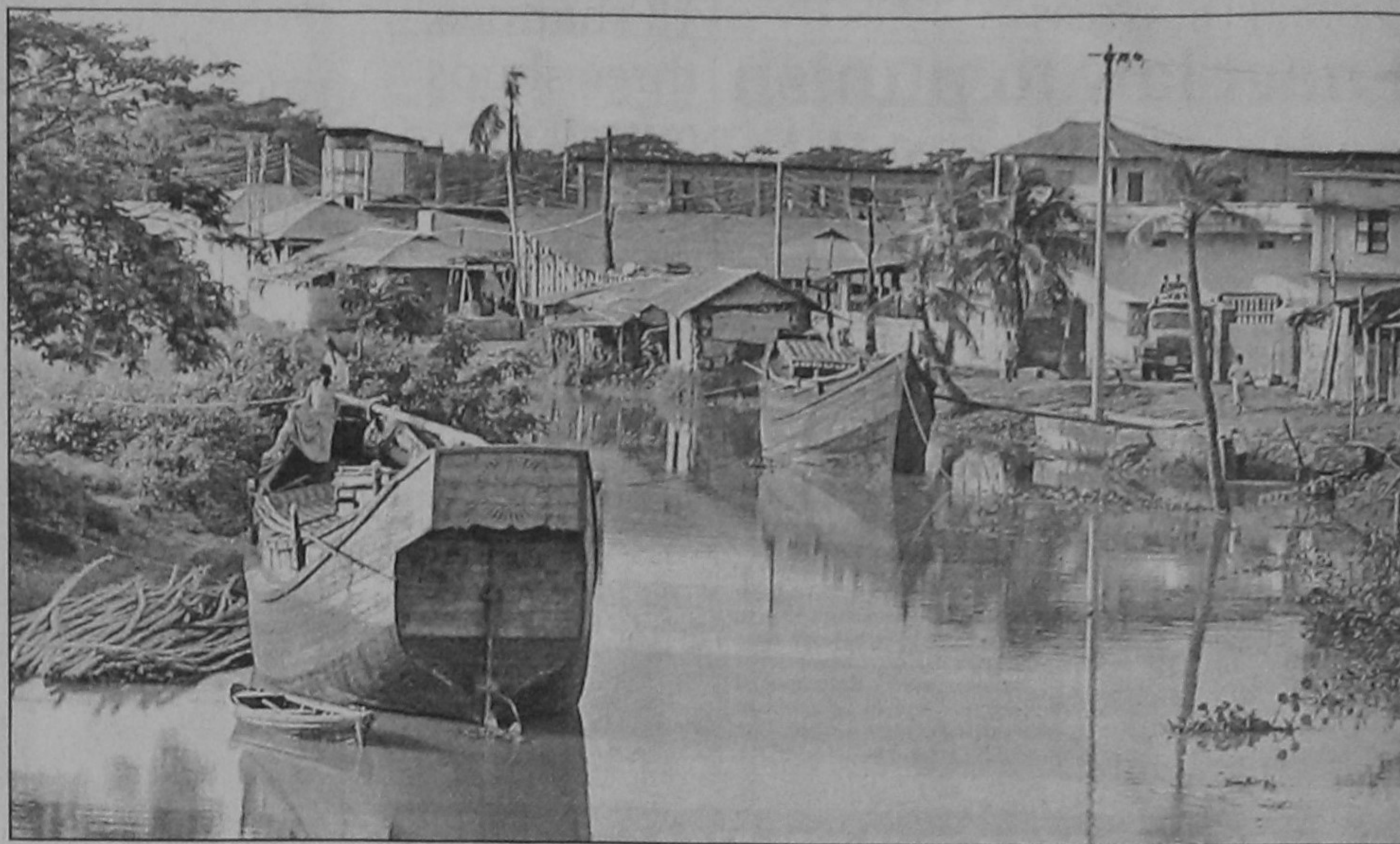
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Shaheed Alhaj Uster Welfare Trust distributed scholarships among meritorious students in Moulvibazar yesterday.

A function was held in this connection at Moulvibazar Poursava auditorium with former additional secretary Abdul Kadir Mahmood in the Chair. Deputy Commissioner Md Alkama Siddique attended the function as chief guest and distributed the scholarships among the students.

President of the Trust Syed AbuZafar Ahmed and Prof Abdul Khaliq attended the function as special guests.

A total of 21 students of five secondary schools in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila got the scholarship.



Squeezed by grabbers, Chankhali canal in South Patia in Chittagong is becoming difficult for water transports to carry salt and other products from the industrial area.

## ALIM JUTE MILLS

# Workers lift barricade on promise to solve crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police pushed back agitating workers of Alim Jute Mills to the mill compound about twenty minutes after they raised barricades on the Khulna-Jessore highway yesterday.

Clashes, apprehended by many earlier, could be avoided as Khulna Metropolitan Police Commissioner Naimur Rahman Chowdhury intervened and assured the workers that he would try to resolve the crisis.

Earlier, at 9 am yesterday, the workers put up barricades on Khulna-Jessore highway near Alim Jute Mill but could not continue the agitation after 9-20 am.

'Our workers withdrew the road blockade to avert a fierce clash with police, who were on riot gear', said CBA president of the mill Abdus Salam.

'We have given the last chance to BJMC (Bangladesh Jute Mills

Corporation) authorities to resolve the crisis by February 16', he added.

The workers are demanding reopening of the mill by February 17 and payment of all arrears.

The Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Commissioner Naimur Rahman Chowdhury assured the laid-off workers of making arrangement for an acceptable solution to their problems before the February 16 deadline.

He also said he would talk to BJMC officials.

He however said, 'Law will take its own course in case of violation of emergency power rules by disrupting road and rail communications'.

'We do not bother KMP Commissioner's warning. We want him to resolve the crisis by using his good offices', CBA president Abdus Salam said.

'Hungry workers will no more change the decision. They will go for an indefinite rail-road barricade if their demands are not

met this time within the deadline'.

Panic gripped the entire Atra industrial belt in Khulna as laid-off workers and members of their families joined the blockade programme, raising full throated slogans 'Bhat Chai, Noile Amra Marte Chai (we want food or to die).

The brief road blockade disrupted traffic on Khulna-Jessore highway and also created panic among passengers. Many of them got down and moved to safer places fearing clash between police and agitating workers.

However, clash was averted due to intervention by the KMP Commissioner who ordered his forces to withdraw and requested workers not to take law in their hands but to wait till February 16 to resolve the crisis.

Project Director Monowar Hossain also hoped that the jute mill would be reopened after the sixth lay-off period expires on February 16.

## Pistol snatched from DB police recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Nilphamari police Friday night recovered the snatched pistol of DB police from Khagrabad village in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur district and arrested nine people in this connection.

The pistol was snatched about one month ago from Nilphamari Saidpur highway from a DB officer.

Police arrested some persons in the previous night on suspicion. Acting on their information, police recovered the snatched pistol from the house of one Nabiul of Khagrabad village.

The nine arrested people are Abdul Khaleq, Rezaul, Santosh, Anisur, Hadi, Lebu, Sultan, Gausul and Nabiul.

The pistol with bullets was snatched by a gang of miscreants on the night of December 31 from DB Sub-inspector Noor Alam when he was going to Saidpur from Nilphamari. The bullets could not be recovered.

## 'Empower local govts'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a workshop held in Kaliganj upazila yesterday stressed on empowerment of local government bodies to institutionalise democracy and ensure good governance.

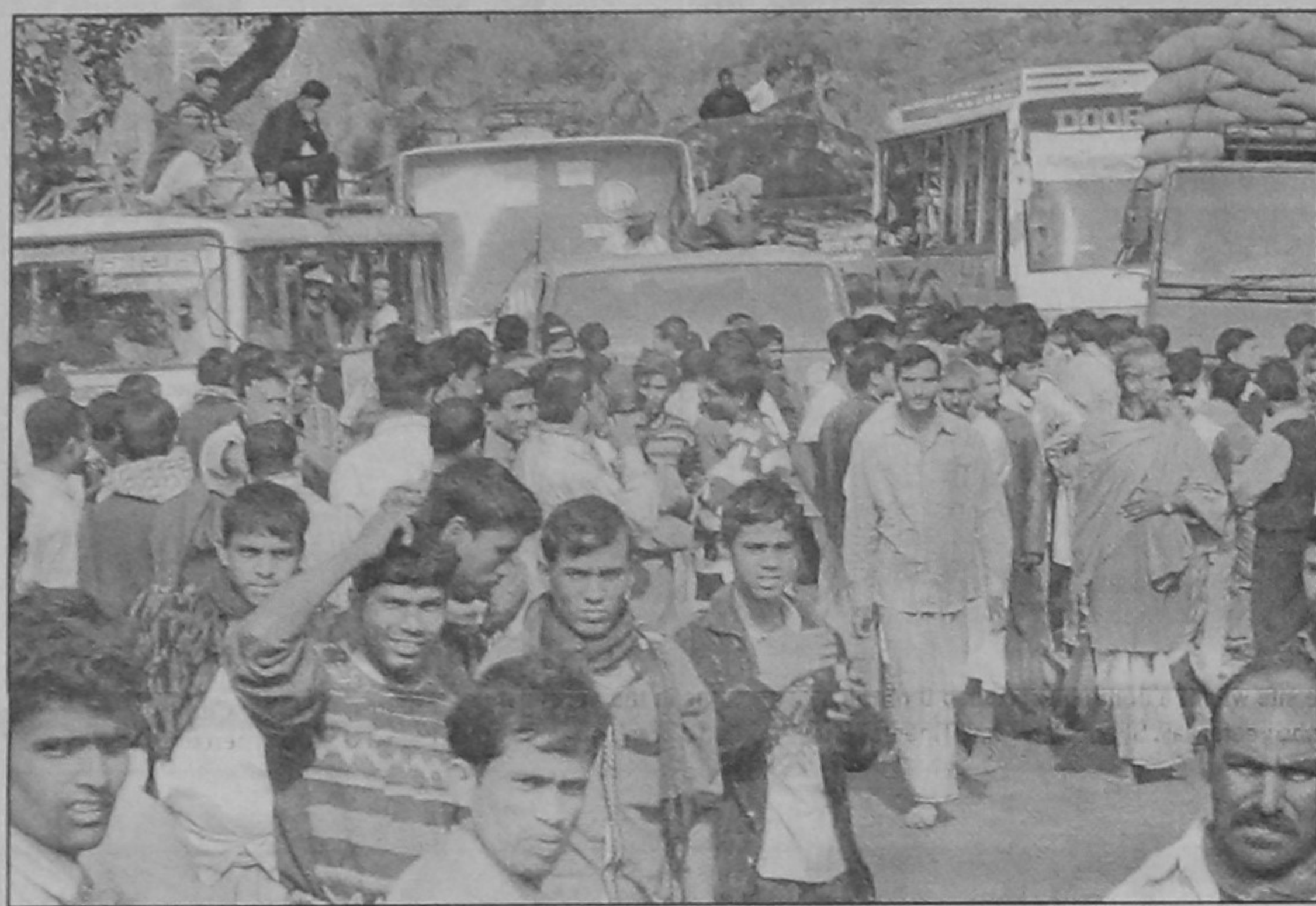
Shushilan, an NGO, organised the workshop titled, 'Making Union Parishad (UP) Transparent and Accountable to People for Rural Development'.

Held at Mahatpur Krishi Service Centre auditorium, the workshop was presided by Prof Gazi Azizur Rahman.

Kaliganj upazila agriculture extension officer Ganesh Chandra Mondal was present as chief guest while upazila fisheries officer Sirajur Rahman, upazila accounts officer Dipayan Debnath and assistant education officer Ashrafur Alam were present as special guests.

Speakers underscored the need for strengthening local government institutions so that it can deliver services to people at their doorsteps.

The Union Parishad has turned into a very weak institution due to lack of resource and bureaucratic control which are main impediments in strengthening local government institutions, they said.



Farmers block road at Shialkhol Bazar in Sirajganj yesterday protesting fraud in weighing fertiliser by dealers.

## Rivals kill 2 outlaws

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Two outlaws including a regional leader of banned outfit 'Sarbahara' were killed yesterday by the members of a rival faction at Shampur Char village of Bera upazila.

One of them was identified as Md Bachchu Mondol, 28, son of Jasim Mondol of Dhalarchar and regional leader of 'Sarbahara'. The identity of the other remained unknown.

Police said they were shot dead by the followers of a rival faction at Shampur Char village. On information, they rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies. They sent those to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Officer-in-charge of Bera Police Station Md Maniruzzaman said the two might have been killed following an internal feud in the outfit.

'We are trying to arrest the murderers,' he added.

Police said Bachchu had been accused in several cases on different charges including robbery.

## FERTILISER

# Sirajganj farmers protest cheating in weight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

About eight hundred agitating farmers staged demonstrations and laid a siege to godowns of fertiliser dealers at Shialkhol Bazar in Sirajganj Sadar upazila yesterday protesting alleged cheating in weighing of the items during distribution.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control after assurance by

Sirajganj Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Moazzfar Ahmed and the deputy director of Agriculture Extension Department rushed to the spot with a police team and brought the situation under control.

According to the UNO, fertiliser dealers Nazmul Hakim Ranju and Rafikul Islam Helal arranged a

distribution programme in front of their godowns at Shialkhol Bazar at about 9 am, where about 800 farmers gathered.

Farmers alleged that the dealers were giving 40 kilograms of fertiliser in a 50 kg bag.

Realizing the trick, the farmers brought out a procession in the market and laid a siege to the godowns. The dealers escape.

On of information, UNO Moazzfar Ahmed and AED DD Khandaker Hasibur Rahman rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control by assuring the farmers of fair distribution.

When contacted the UNO said steps would be taken against the two dealers as they cheated farmers.

On the other hand, the dealers said they distributed the bags they got from Baghabari Ghat.

# DEMAND FOR TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS



From left, sector commanders of Liberation War at divisional freedom fighters' convention in Barisal, and human chains at Gouranga Bazar in Kishoreganj and Moulvibazar Government College demanding trial of war criminals.