

LALMONIRHAT-BURIMARI ROUTE

45 trains derail in 5 months

Lack of sleepers, stone makes the run-down track risky

A CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat

As many as 45 incidents of train derailment occurred on 85-kilometre long Lalmonirhat-Burimari route under Lalmonirhat Railway Division during the last five months as shortage of sleepers and stone has made the line awfully risky.

Seven of the derailments took place in September, nine each in October and November, seven in December last year, 10 in January this year and three during the first five days of February.

A Lalmonirhat-bound passenger train from Burimari Land Port Railway Station derailed at Aluddin Nagar between Bawra and Patgram stations on Lalmonirhat-Burimari route on Thursday morning. As twelve wheels of four compartments of the passenger train went off the track, regular schedule of two trains on Lalmonirhat-Burimari and Lalmonirhat-Parbotipur route was disturbed, railway officials said.

To avoid derailment on Lalmonirhat-Burimari route, trains have to move at only 8 to 14 kilometres per hour while usual speed of a train is 45 kilometres per hour, said Abul Kashem, a train driver.

"Still the slow moving trains often face derailment as



A railway track without sleepers and stones near Aditmari station on Lalmonirhat-Burimari line, left, and a Bangladesh Railway signpost indicating 15 km per hour speed limit on the route.

lack of stones and sleepers makes the route risky and unfit for use. I'm an experienced driver under Lalmonirhat Railway Division but I can't ensure that the train driven by me would not derail on the route," he said.

Lalmonirhat Railway Divisional Traffic Superintendent Syed Zahurul Islam said lack of sufficient sleepers and absence of stones in the time expired rail lines are responsible for recurrent derailment of trains.

He said ninety per cent of sleepers on Lalmonirhat-Burimari route have become

useless.

Sources of Lalmonirhat Railway Divisional Mechanical Engineer's Office said the

It costs Bangladesh Railway (BR) Tk 65,000 to 70,000 to rescue each derailed train and the BR has spent Tk 28 lakh 56 thousand to conduct rescue work in 42 incidents of derailments on Lalmonirhat-Burimari route in the last five months.

Lalmonirhat Divisional Railway Office sources said the government sanctioned Tk 150 crore and 4 lakh for repairing rail line, 13 station build-

ings, small culverts and platforms of Lalmonirhat-Burimari railway route. The BR has already called an international tender from contractors. The last date of tender dropping is February 17 and the tender will be opened the following day.

Lalmonirhat Railway Divisional Engineer Al-Fattah Masudur Rahman said repair work of railway line, station buildings, platforms, and culverts on the route is likely to start within six months after approval by the ministry concerned.

Drunkard husband sets fire to wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Victim of drunkard husband's arson attack, a newly married woman is now fighting for life at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.

Mukut Chowdhury, vice president of central Chhatra Dal, poured kerosene on the body of his wife Kamrun Nahar Sukhi before setting fire to it at his South Balubari residence here at about 12:45pm on Thursday, family sources said.

Hearing her screaming, neighbours rushed there and sent her to hospital. Mukut went into hiding after the incident.

Doctors said 60 per cent of her body was burnt badly. Sukhi is the daughter of advocate Khairat Ali of village Alokjhari in Khansama upazila.

Since their marriage only 26 days ago, the couple used to quarrel frequently over Mukut's drinking wine at night, family sources said.

Mukut was drunken during the incident, they said.

MUNSHIGANJ KILLING
Two arrestedA CORRESPONDENT,
Munshiganj

Police yesterday arrested two people in connection with killing of two BNP workers at Jajira of Adhara union in Munshiganj Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

The arrestees are Abu Mia, 20 and Abdur Rashid, 32. Munshiganj police arrested Abu at Gazipur in the morning and Rashid at Narayanganj at night.

Two BNP activists were killed and 15 others injured in a fierce clash between workers of Awami League (AL) and BNP on the day.

Khukumoni, wife of a deceased named Shahjahan Khan filed a murder case just after the incident accusing 56 people with Munshiganj Sadar Police Station, said Munshiganj officer-in-charge AKM Abdullah. Both of the arrestees were accused in the murder case, he said.

More 11,000 hectares under Boro farming in Mymensingh

DAE targets 9 lakh tonnes on 2,32,500 hectares

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

To increase production of Boro paddy in Mymensingh district, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) has taken initiative to bring additional 11,000 hectares of land under Boro cultivation in all 12 upazilas of the district during the current season.

This year's target is to bring 2,32,500 hectares of land under Boro cultivation against last year's 2,21,500 hectares.

The production target has been set at 8,93,784 tonnes of paddy, which is 28,000 tonnes more compared to the previous year, DAE sources said.

Of the total land area of

cultivation, 42,400 hectares have been brought under cultivation of high yielding hybrid variety that is gaining popularity among the farmers, DAE officials said, adding that the average production of hybrid Boro paddy is 4.7 tonnes whereas local variety produces 3.7 tonnes.

The farmers are busy in preparing and cultivating their land and the field level agriculture officials are giving them necessary suggestions, said DAE Deputy Director Moazzam Haque.

He also told this correspondent that special initiatives have been taken for the cultivation of hybrid varieties to boost a record production in the

ongoing Boro season.

To make the programme successful, necessary agricultural inputs including quality Boro seeds have been distributed while steps have been taken to ensure smooth supply of fertilisers and uninterrupted supply of electricity, he added.

Besides DAE has trained 980 farmers on modern agricultural technologies, crop management and preservation of quality seeds.

There is no shortage of fertiliser in the district as the distribution of fertiliser had begun in all 12 upazilas of the district through 140 dealers and 417 sub-dealers, DAE sources said.

Abducted RU JCD worker freed, 2 BCL men held

RU CORRESPONDENT

Police have rescued a Rajshahi University (RU) Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) worker and arrested three alleged kidnappers including two Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists from near the campus.

Rescued JCD man is Sagor Bhowmik, a masters student of Language Department and a resident of Habibur Rahman Hall.

Arrested kidnappers are Tariqul Islam Tuhin and Abdullah Al Faruk, both RU BCL activists and Golam Panjaton, a resident of Mizaner Mor, an intersection near the campus. Tuhin is a masters student of Arabic Department and Faruk is a fourth year student of Economics Department.

Sagor was kidnapped from in front of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Hall on Thursday, said Mother zone assistant commissioner of police Jahangir Hossain. Abductors snatched Sagor's money bag and cell phone and later demanded a ransom of Tk 30,000 from him in exchange of his release, he said.

When contacted, RU BCL general secretary Ayeen Uddin said Tuhin and Faruk are not BCL activists.

Arms peddler held in sathkira

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Sathkira

Police arrested an arms peddler from Badamtala in Sadar upazila and recovered a revolver, a shutter gun and three bullets from his possession.

The arrestee is Mizanur Rahman, 35, of village Bharukhali in Sadar upazila.

During interrogation, he told police that Hafizul Islam of village Chingri Malmalia in Dumuria in Khulna district bought the firearms from Shawkat Ali of village Patil in Hasnabad thana in India and asked him to reach it to Amjad Hossain of village Chingri Malmalia, police said.

When contacted, Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Kader Beg confirmed the incident.

Rab plans combing operations in 10 Khulna dists

Militants under watch ahead of Shaheed Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Khulna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) is taking preparation to launch combing operations ahead of Shaheed Day in ten districts of Khulna division.

Surveillance by intelligence agencies at key points in the districts has already been intensified, but the Rab officials would not disclose the exact date for starting operations, as it might help the militants and criminals to flee their hideouts.

Islamist militants now in different jails in Khulna division have been kept under constant watch. They will again be interrogated if situation so demands, police sources said.

Sources in the Rab claimed that a new strategy is being followed by intelligence agencies to achieve greater success in gathering information about movements of Islamist militants and track them down.

Rab and special branch of

police are also keeping watch on suspected places including madrasas, private hostels and residential hotels, sources added.

Meanwhile, the cases filed in connection with serial blasts at nine places of Jessore town on August 17, 2005 have been shifted to Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal for quick disposal.

Nine separate cases were filed with Jessore Kotwali and Railway police stations the same day.

Jessore police and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Dhaka, jointly investigated the cases and then submitted charge sheets to Second Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Jessore, accusing 14 cadres of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). During trial, the court recorded statements of the prosecution witnesses. But the cases have been shifted to Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal, which will begin hearing of the prosecution witnesses from February 26.

Three Ansars among 5 hurt as robbers hurl bombs

A CORRESPONDENT,
Meherpur

At least five people, including three Ansars, were seriously injured as a gang of robbers hurled bombs at them while fleeing after committing robbery at village Kashba under Gangni upazila on Thursday night, victims and police said.

Some 12 robbers attacked the house of Haji Azizur Rahman at night, beat up the family members and looted gold ornaments and Tk 7,000 from the house.

Hearing a screams, villagers and Ansars of Kashba camp came to their help. As they chased the robbers, they hurled three bombs at them causing injuries to three Ansars named Liakat Ali, Rezaul Haq and Abdul Hamid and two unnamed villagers. Villagers also caught a robber.

All the injured are undergoing treatment at Gangani Upzila Health Complex.

Ex-BCL leader arrested for 'extortion'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Police has arrested a former leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on charge of extortion.

The arrestee, Foyzal Alam Biggan of village Natun Bazar Kholahati under Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur, was held from Haldibari Bazaar under Parbatipur Sadar upazila on Thursday following allegations from the operators at Parbatipur Petroleum Depot.

During the last seven days, Biggan had been threatening operators at Parbatipur Petroleum Depot, a hub of largest oil operators including Padma, Jamuna and Meghna, of dire consequences if they fail to give them toll as per his demand, police said.

As the operators declined to meet his demand, Biggan made a call over cell phone, asked them to come to Parbatipur AL office on Thursday evening with Tk 5 lakh and threatened them to kill in case of failure, said a staff of the oil depot seeking anonymity.

Biggan faces about 10 cases including those for murder, extortion, and abduction, police said, adding that lobbying started for release of the former BCL leader soon after his arrest.

Biggan, who went into hiding after declaration of the state of emergency in January last year, returned to the area prior to the December 29 national election and actively worked for AL nominated candidate Md Mostafizur Rahman Fizar, said police and locals of Parbatipur upazila.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

STRUGGLE FOR ARSENIC-FREE WATER: Children carrying drinking water from distant places as water from most tube-wells in Dohar upazila in Dhaka district is affected with arsenic.

FLY SAFER SKIES

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IOSA

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European Commission envoy Dr Stephan Frowein addressing a discussion at Charsidhai village in Mollar Char union under Gaibandha Sadar upazila after inaugurating a vocational training centre there yesterday.