



PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

Students of Manik Pir High School in Dinajpur Sadar upazila attend classes under trees on Monday as the schoolhouse has remained without any repair since the April 14 nor'wester blew off its roof.

## OSMANI MURDER Sylhet journos start week-long agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Local journalists yesterday began a seven-day agitation programme demanding immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to the killers of Fateh Osmani, Sylhet correspondent of Saptahik-2000.

The programme includes signature campaign, protest rally, mourning procession and submission of a memorandum to the home minister through the deputy commissioner.

Signature collection began at Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar yesterday afternoon. President of Sylhet District Bar Association Shahidul Islam formally opened the programme, which will continue for five days until May 8.

The journalists will bring out a mourning procession on May 9 and submit a memorandum to the home minister through the deputy commissioner the same day.

Fateh Osmani came under attack by an armed gang while he was returning home in the city on the night of April 18. He was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital and then shifted to Apollo Hospital in the capital where he succumbed to his injuries on April 28.

## Teesta bridge set to miss deadline

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The under-construction bridge over Teesta River in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila sees completion of only about 55 percent work although the stipulated time ends on May 31 this year.

Work of the 750 metre-long and 12.11 metre-wide bridge began on September 7, 2006.

The Roads and Highway Department and the Ministry of Communications are implementing the bridge project while two construction firms -- Amin-Delim (Bangladesh) and Asco-JV (India) -- are constructing the road over Teesta in a joint venture.

The project manager of Amin-Delim (Bangladesh), Shafiqur Rahman claimed that 70 percent work of the bridge had been completed.

"We hope to complete the remaining work by September this year. We faced some problem in the middle of 2007 over approval of the bridge design, which led us to suspend construction work for four months," he said, adding that over 200 labourers are working relentlessly to complete construction of the bridge in time.

Construction of 16 pillars, five culverts, an under-pass and approach roads have been almost completed, said sources of the construction firms.

When contacted, RHD

sub-divisional engineer (Bridge Project) Shafiqur Islam said it would not be possible to complete the bridge by May 31 deadline as only 55 per cent of the work has been completed in 43 months.

The bridge is a long time demand of about 45 lakh people of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts, who have been using the century-old

railway-cum-road bridge over the Teesta River amid risk.

"We drive vehicles very cautiously on the bridge as it faces risk of collapse any time," said bus driver Haider Ali, 60, who is also a freedom fighter.

"People of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram have been facing untold sufferings as Teesta railway-cum-road bridge on the most important

doorway to the two districts has become highly risky. We are eagerly waiting for the road bridge over the Teesta," said local businessman Goutam Sarker.

Cross sections of people in the two districts have urged the authorities concerned to take initiative for early completion of the Teesta bridge to ease communication with other parts of the country.



PHOTO: STAR

Only a little over 50 per cent work of this bridge across Teesta River has been completed although the stipulated time ends on May 31 this year.

## Robbers in guise of Rab men

23 arrested in Trishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Trishal police arrested a gang of 23 criminals who went to commit robbery posing as Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) men at Mohishhati village in Dhanikhola under Trishal upazila on Monday night.

The gang members in black uniform introduced themselves as Rab men and stormed the house of Mokarram Mondal at Mohishhati at around 11:30pm on Monday to commit robbery, police said.

Hearing screams of the inmates, the villagers rushed to the spot and informed the local union parishad chairman and police.

A police team led by Trishal Police Station Officer-in-Charge Firoj Talukder went to the spot and arrested the criminals with the help of local people.

A few sharp weapons were seized from their possession, police said, adding that the arrestees are from different districts including Mymensingh, Sylhet, Comilla and Dhaka.

Police yesterday produced the arrestees before a Mymensingh court from where they were sent to jail.

In Chittagong, members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Thursday arrested four robbers in the city's Muradpur area and recovered two firearms from their possession.

The arrestees were identified as Sirajul Islam, 30, Abu Zaker, 28, Nasir, 35, and Rafiq, 35. Acting on a tip-off that a

group of armed robbers gathered in front of Jalal Plaza in Muradpur area under Panchlaish police station for committing robbery in a bank, a squad of Rab-7 of Chittagong raided the area at around 2:30pm.

The Rab men arrested the four along with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw from the spot and recovered two local-made single-barrel three-quarter guns, eight cartridges and two machetes from their possession, sources said.

Meanwhile, a court in Sherpur on Wednesday last sentenced three people to 10 years rigorous imprisonment each in a robbery case, reports UNB.

The convicts are Enamul Haque Member, 45, Rajon Miah, 30, and Shipon Miah, 35, of Nandina village of Jamalpur district. Of them, Enamul was tried in absentia.

According to prosecution, an engine driven boat carrying 117 sacks of wheat and 83 sacks of sesame was going to Narayanganj from Roumari in Kurigram. As the boat reached Pakkhamari area in Sherpur Sadar upazila on the midnight of August 31, 2002, a gang numbering 15/20 swooped on the boat and looted the goods.

Later, businessman Kasabuddin filed a case in this connection.

After examining the records and witnesses, Joint District and Sessions Judge SM Badrul Islam pronounced the verdict, acquitting 15 others.

## One injured as trains collide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Rail communication on Dhaka-Mymensingh route was disrupted for about two hours after a Dhaka-bound train hit another stationary train at Mymensingh railway station yesterday morning, leaving one person injured.

Md Nazrul Islam, stationmaster of Mymensingh Railway Station, told The Daily Star the train communication resumed around 6:00am.

He also said a three-member body was formed yesterday, headed by Divisional Transportation Officer Nazmul Islam, to investigate the incident.

Injured assistant driver Sabuj Hasan, 30, of the Dhaka-bound train was admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. But its driver Abul Based fled the scene soon after the incident.

Railway sources said the accident took place when the Dhaka-bound passenger train Bhawal Express from Dewanganj in Jamalpur rammed into the back of another passenger train Jaria Local from behind around 4:20am, damaging a compartment of the stationary train.

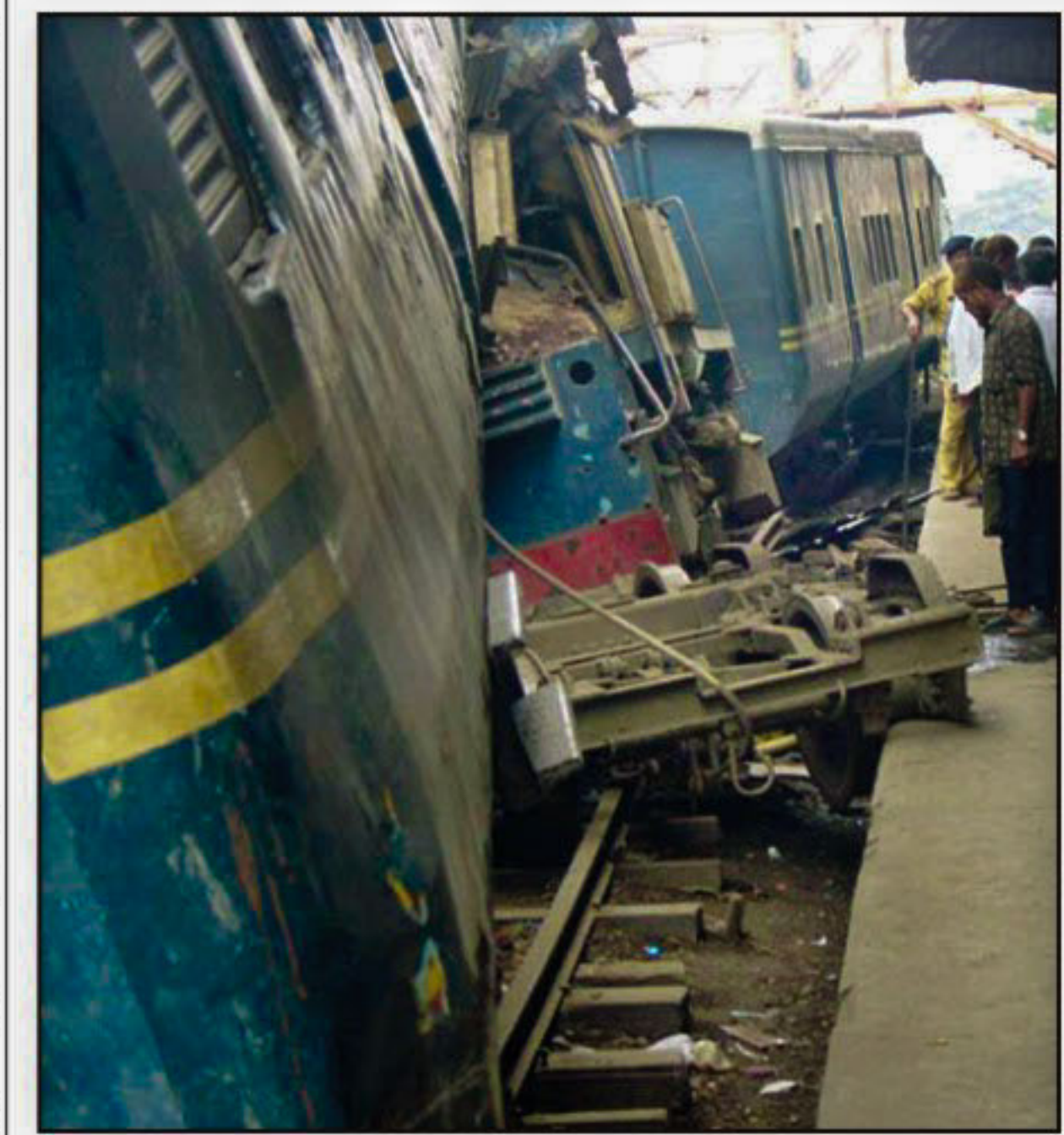


PHOTO: STAR

Collision of two trains at Mymensingh Railway Station left a train driver injured and suspended train communication on Dhaka-Mymensingh route for two hours yesterday.

## SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

### OC stand released

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Meherpur Sadar Police Station Rabilul Islam has been stand released for negligence of duty during Monday's clash over tender dropping at local LGED office. Sources said the officer-in-charge has been asked to join Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP). Police said a gang led by district Jubo League General Secretary Abdullah Al-Mamun Bipul attacked Golam Rasul, president of Meherpur Sadar upazila Awami League, when Rasul and his men reached LGED office to drop tender documents. The attackers exploded six bombs, leaving 30 people injured. They also hurled bombs at a Rab vehicle partly damaging its front side, Rab sources said.

### Fire at Elite Paint office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Office documents and stationeries worth around Tk 4 lakh were gutted in a fire at storeroom of Elite Paint office near GEC Intersection in the city yesterday. Sources in Fire Service and Civil Defence said the fire broke out at around 11:00am at the storeroom on the third floor of Elite House. However, CDA Avenue Branch of Trust Bank Limited on the ground and first floor of the building narrowly escaped damage as the fire didn't spread further. Seven fire fighting units from the city's different fire stations rushed to the spot and doused the fire that originated from a cigarette butt, said locals.



PHOTO: STAR

Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) members seized 1420 bottles of banned phensidyl syrup kept inside colour lab machines on a Dhaka-bound truck near the east end of Bangabandhu Bridge yesterday.

## NOAKHALI, GOPALGANJ 11 sued on war crime charges

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Eleven people were sued in Noakhali and Gopalganj yesterday and the day before on charge of war crimes including murder, looting and arson in 1971.

A case was filed against Md Belal, 60, an alleged collaborator (razakar) of Pakistan occupation forces, with the court of Judicial Magistrate ASM Shahidullah of Noakhali yesterday, reports a correspondent.

Witness to Bhuiyan Bari killings in Hasanpur under Begumganj upazila of the district Mokhesur Rahman, 55, filed the petition case.

The court took the case into cognisance and ordered Begumganj police station to investigate it.

According to the case, the accused and his accomplices on November 27, 1971 went to the spot at 6am and attacked the freedom fighters camp set up at a house there. Twenty-six freedom fighters were staying in the camp.

Though the freedom fighters could manage to escape, four members of the family residing in the house -- Shahid Ullah, 19, Nurjahan, 21, Nasima, 3, and Monwara, 21, - were shot dead by 'razakar' Belal and his accomplices.

The razakars also looted and set on fire 13 houses in the area except for the house of Belal.

The plaintiff and some others witnessed the carnage hiding in a garden behind the houses.

In Gopalganj, a case was filed against 10 alleged razakars on charge of killing

seven freedom fighters during 1971 liberation war.

Abdul Latif Sheikh, brother of martyred freedom fighter Matiar Rahman filed the case with a Muktudpur court on Monday.

The accused allegedly encircled a house of Abdul Hamid of Bagat village in Dignagar union where seven freedom fighters including Matiar Rahman were preparing for an operation on August 20, 1971.

The 10 'razakars' took the freedom fighters out of the house at gunpoint. Since then the seven freedom fighters remained missing.

The Public Prosecutor office sources said, Senior Judicial Magistrate of the cognisance court Mostofa Kamal accepted the case and ordered the officer-in-charge (OC) of Muktudpur police station to take necessary steps.

The accused in the case are Habibur Rahman Matubbar, 62, Mohiuddin Hawlader Moni, 61, of Tantikanda village of Rajoir upazila, Md Selim, 63, Abdur Rahman Sheikh, 65, Syed Fakir, 68, Siraj Fakir, 64, Abdul Haque Sheikh, 67, Kibria Sheikh, 61, Abul Kalam Munshi, 63, of Babon Danga village and Mujibur Mina, 65, of Lakhonda village in Muktudpur upazila.

All six witnesses in the case are freedom fighters who escaped from the hands of the razakars on the day.

In the ejaah the complainant accused the 10 'rajakars' of murder, rape, looting, arson and other crimes against humanity.

## Protector turns predator

Jessore municipality out to fill up Laldighi

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Jessore municipality authorities now seem adamant to fill up Laldighi for constructing a market there, ignoring the residents' demand for saving the important water body in the heart of the town.

Several political, social and cultural organisations including Workers Party, NAP, Gono Forum, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote and Sangbadpatra Parishad formed human chains on a few occasions protesting the move to fill up Laldighi.

On Monday, they submitted a memorandum to local government ministry through the deputy commissioner with signatures of seven thousand people to

save the water body.

The town dwellers have continued programmes under the banner of Civil Society of Jessore for the purpose.

But the municipality authorities are squeezing the water body by putting wastage into the water body and renting lands on its bank to make shops, Ekramud-Daula, the president of Jessore Sangbadpatra Parishad, said.

"Laldighi, located in the heart of the town, is very important for the area. Other water bodies belonging to private owners have already been filled up. So there is no other alternative to collect water if any fire incident occurs in the adjacent areas," said Iqbal Kabir Zahid, secretary of district Workers Party.

Jessore municipality Councillor Muksimul Bari Apu, also a panel mayor, said it is an old decision of the municipality to fill up Laldighi.

If a market is constructed at that place, 80 percent of the salary of their staff could be paid from its rent, he added.

Earlier in 1984, the Jessore municipality authorities had taken a move to fill up Laldighi but they changed the decision in the face of strong protests from town dwellers.

In 1864, authorities under the then British government arranged digging several water bodies including Laldighi in Jessore town to meet people's need for water.



PHOTO: STAR

Laldighi, a large pond dug up in Jessore town around 150 years ago, is getting smaller as dumping of garbage on and leasing of land of its banks continue while municipality authorities have decided to fill it up for construction of a market, ignoring the opinion of town residents.