BANSHKHALI POWER PLANT

Khas land people wary of eviction

PINAKI ROY *and* DWAIPAYAN BARUA, *back from Banshkhali, Ctg*

Fear of losing livelihood and shelter on khas land has turned hundreds of landless families in coastal Gondamara union of Banshkhali upazila against the proposed coal-fired power plant of S Alam Group.

Apart from purchasing about 655 acres of privately owned land for the coal plant, the group has demarcated several hundred acres of khas (state-owned) land in Gondamara.

"So far we have completed registration of about 655 acres of land and the process for another 200 acres is ongoing. Besides, there is khas land in the area which we didn't need to buy from anybody. Yet we compensated people following written agreements," Subrata Bhowmik, executive director of S Alam Group, told The Daily Star on Monday.

He, however, didn't go into details about the compensation or the agreements.

A document of Banshkhali land office in Chittagong shows the group wants as much as 5,000 acres of land in five mouzas of Gondamara union.

After the group sought permission for the land purchase, the land office last year conducted a survey and gave information to the group about total land resources in Gondamara.

Two land officials reported to the then assistant commissioner (land) that the 5,000 acres in the five mouzas -- Gondamara, East Boroghona, West Boroghona, Char Boroghona and Alokdia -- include 1,731 acres of khas land.

Hundreds of landless families have been living on khas land in the areas since the pre-Independence era. On a large portion of the land, they have been farming salt and fish.

The number of such families would be more than 3,000, according to local public representatives.

Moulvi Ferdous, member of No 1 Pashchim Boroghona ward, said around 400 landless families of his area live on khas land along the Wapda embankment near the sea shore.

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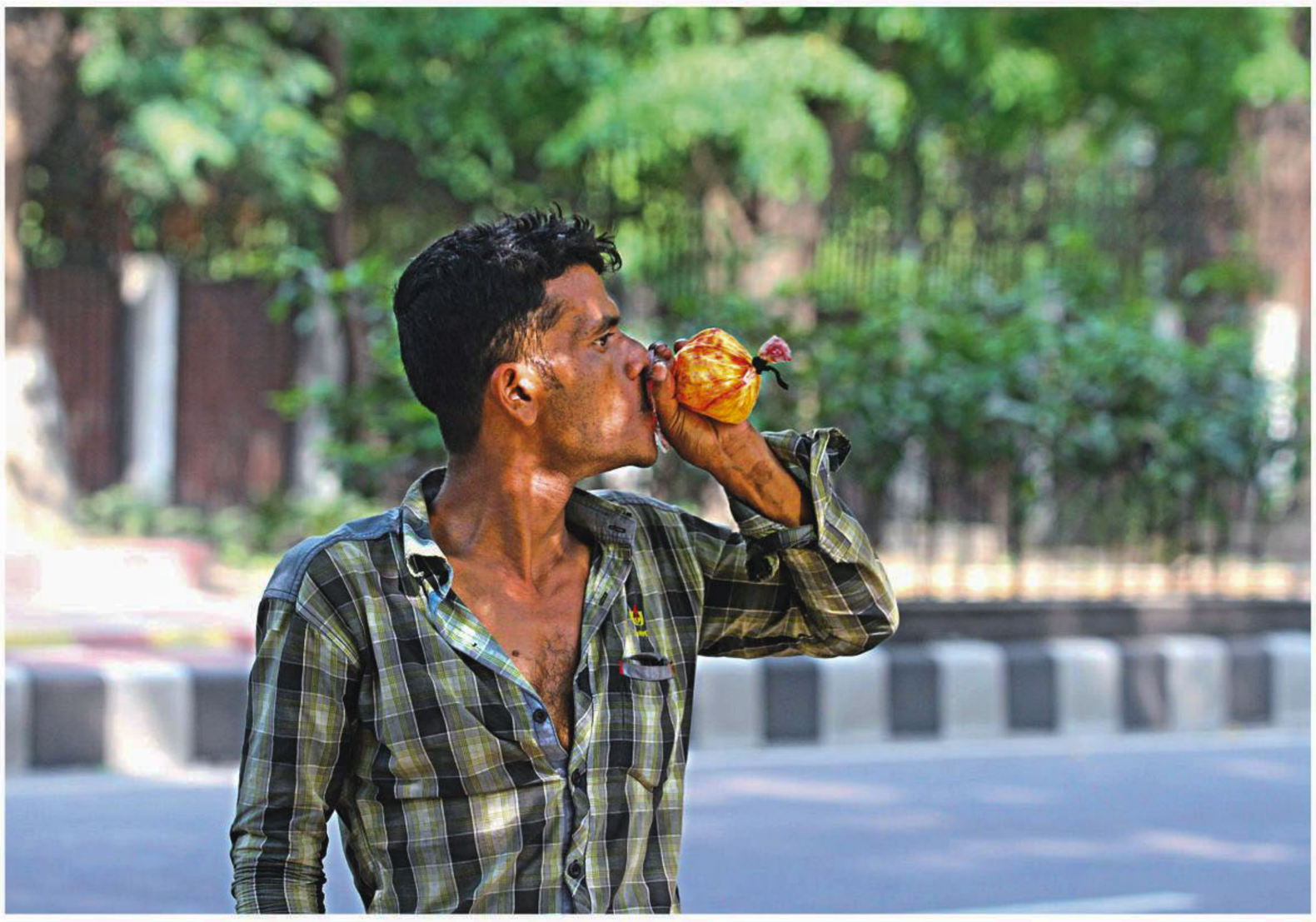

A man sniffing glue on Hare Road in the capital yesterday. Such solvent abuse could lead to irreversible damage to the heart, liver, kidneys, lungs and brain and even death from heart failure or asphyxiation.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Ctg admin tries to dispel fear

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chittagong*

S Alam Group will have to ensure alternative livelihoods for the villagers in Gondamara of Banshkhali upazila if it is to set up a coal-based power plant there, speakers at a views-exchange meeting said yesterday.

They also urged the firm to provide information to convince locals that the proposed plant would not have any adverse impact on the area.

The Chittagong district administration organised the programme at the Circuit House.

Former lawmaker from Banshkhali Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury called upon the government to conduct an enquiry into why the Banshkhali upazila nirbahi officer went to Gondamara on April 4,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Japan quakes toll hits 41

Race against time to find scores trapped under rubbles as bad weather threatens to hamper rescue operations

AFP, *Kumamoto*

Scores of people were feared buried alive yesterday after two powerful quakes hit southern Japan a day apart, killing at least 41 people, as a forecast storm threatened more devastating landslides.

Homes, roads and railway lines were swept away when huge hillsides collapsed as thousands of tonnes of mud were dislodged by the thunderous seismic tremors.

Buildings were reduced to rubble, including a university dormitory and apartment complexes, with dozens of people unaccounted for over a wide area.

"We are aware of multiple locations where people have been buried alive," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a press conference.

"Police, firefighters and Self Defense Force (military) personnel are doing all they can to rescue them."

More than 90,000 people have been evacuated, including 300 from an area near a dam thought to be at risk of collapse.

A hospital was left teetering by yesterday morning's 7.0-magnitude quake, with doctors and patients rushed from the building in darkness. Reuters reported it as a 7.3 magnitude earthquake.

Isolated villages in mountainous areas near the city of Kumamoto were completely cut off by landslides and damage to roads. At least 500 people were believed trapped in one settlement and expected to spend the night in public buildings, reports said.

Aerial footage showed a bridge on a main trunk

PHOTOS ON PAGRE 8

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SLAMMING A CHILD TO DEATH

Accused woman arrested in Dhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

A woman was arrested in the capital yesterday, two days after she allegedly killed a three-year-old boy by slamming him on the floor in Barisal.

Police detained Nupur Begum near a private hospital on Panthapath acting on a tip-off around noon, said Mostafizur Rahman, assistant sub-inspector of Banaripara Police Station in Barisal.

He said she had gone there to meet her husband Badal Mridha, who is a fourth-class employee at the hospital.

Ripon Sheikh, Lovely Begum and their son Hafizur had been living at a room of a tin-shed house -- owned by Nupur -- in TNT area of Banaripara for the last one year.

Around 5:00pm on Thursday, an angry Nupur stormed

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Mujibnagar Day today

UNB, *Dhaka*

The historic Mujibnagar Day is being observed today to mark the formation of Bangladesh's first government that led the Liberation War in 1971.

Senior Awami League leaders assembled at a mango grove at Baidyanathtala, later named Mujibnagar, in Meherpur district on April 17, 1971 to form the provisional government of the independent Bangladesh in the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Syed Shamsul Haque ill, taken to London

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Celebrated poet, dramatist and novelist Syed Shamsul Haque was taken to London for treatment on Friday as he has been suffering from critical lung disease.

The versatile writer of Bangla literature was admitted to Royal Marsden Hospital in London yesterday.

His wife Anwara Syed Haque accompanied him to London where his son, daughter, and son-in-law were already waiting, Tareq Sujat, general secretary of Jatiya Kabita Parishad,

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Nadiya to make Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday cake

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES

Great British Bake Off winner Nadiya Hussain is up for a real royal treat! Appearing on local show, Loose Women, the 31-year-old Bangladeshi baker from Luton, UK announced that she will be baking the Queen's 90th birthday cake.

"I'm making the Queen's 90th birthday cake," she said. "'How often can you say that you are baking the Queen's birthday cake in one sentence?"

She initially thought the request to bake for the Queen was a joke, but her agent confirmed the royal invitation. And while it is clearly an honour to be invited to bake the cake to mark the Queen's milestone birthday, Hussain, who was the first ever Muslim winner of GBBO, admitted she was so nervous that she couldn't even 'look at the oven'.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Criminals kill mother, take away her teenage girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

Saira Begum fought with abductors at her shanty in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar yesterday until she fell to the ground for the effect of poison she was forcefed, watching them take her only daughter away.

It was before 6:00am when the youths numbered eight to ten entered the hut in a slum known as Muroicherra Bosti, Kormodha Union Chairman Abdus Shaheed Babul told the correspondent, quoting locals as saying.

Saira's husband Masuk Miah, a day labourer, said he was not home at the time of the incident.

The woman tussled with the criminals, trying to save her daughter Rumena, aged

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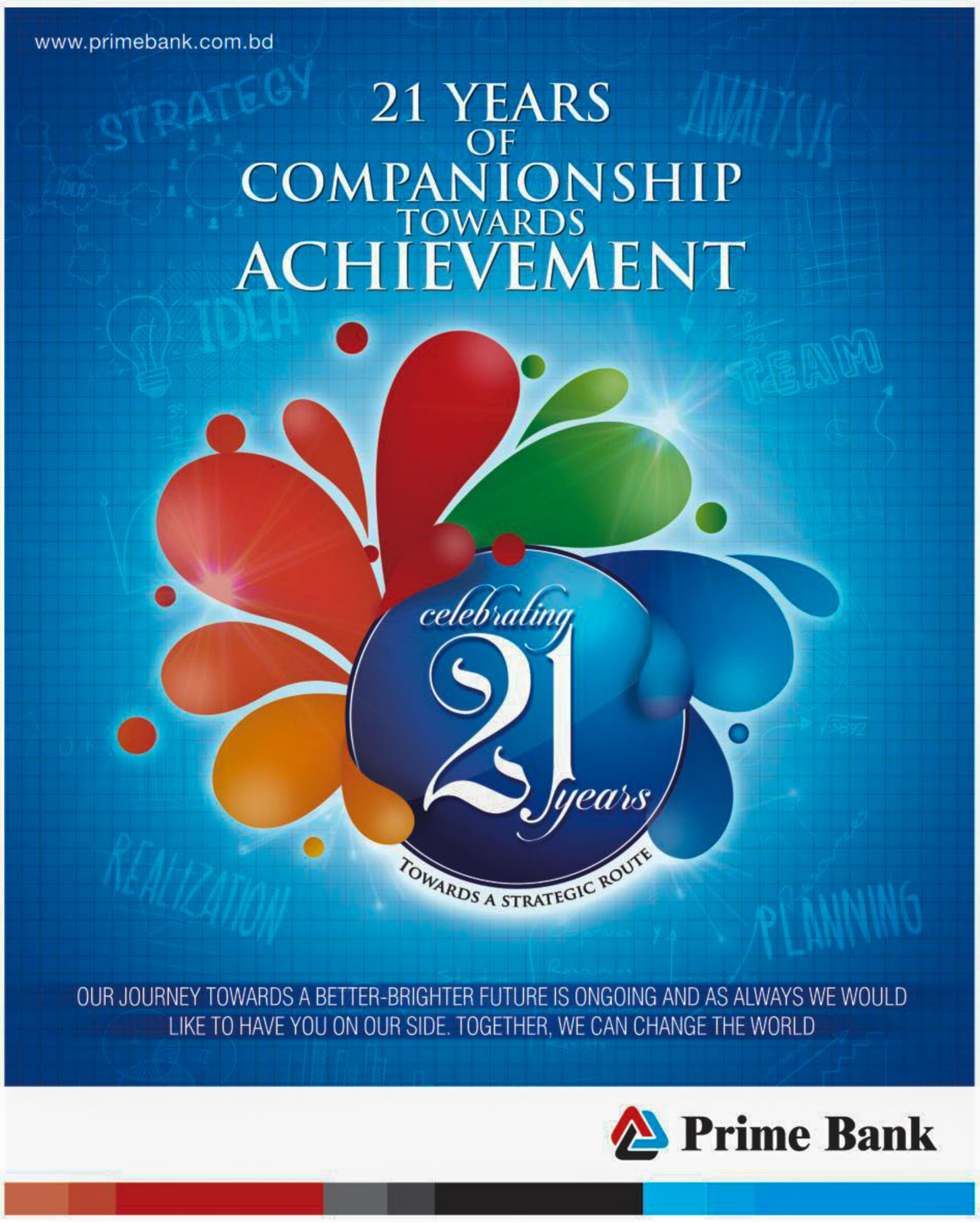

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