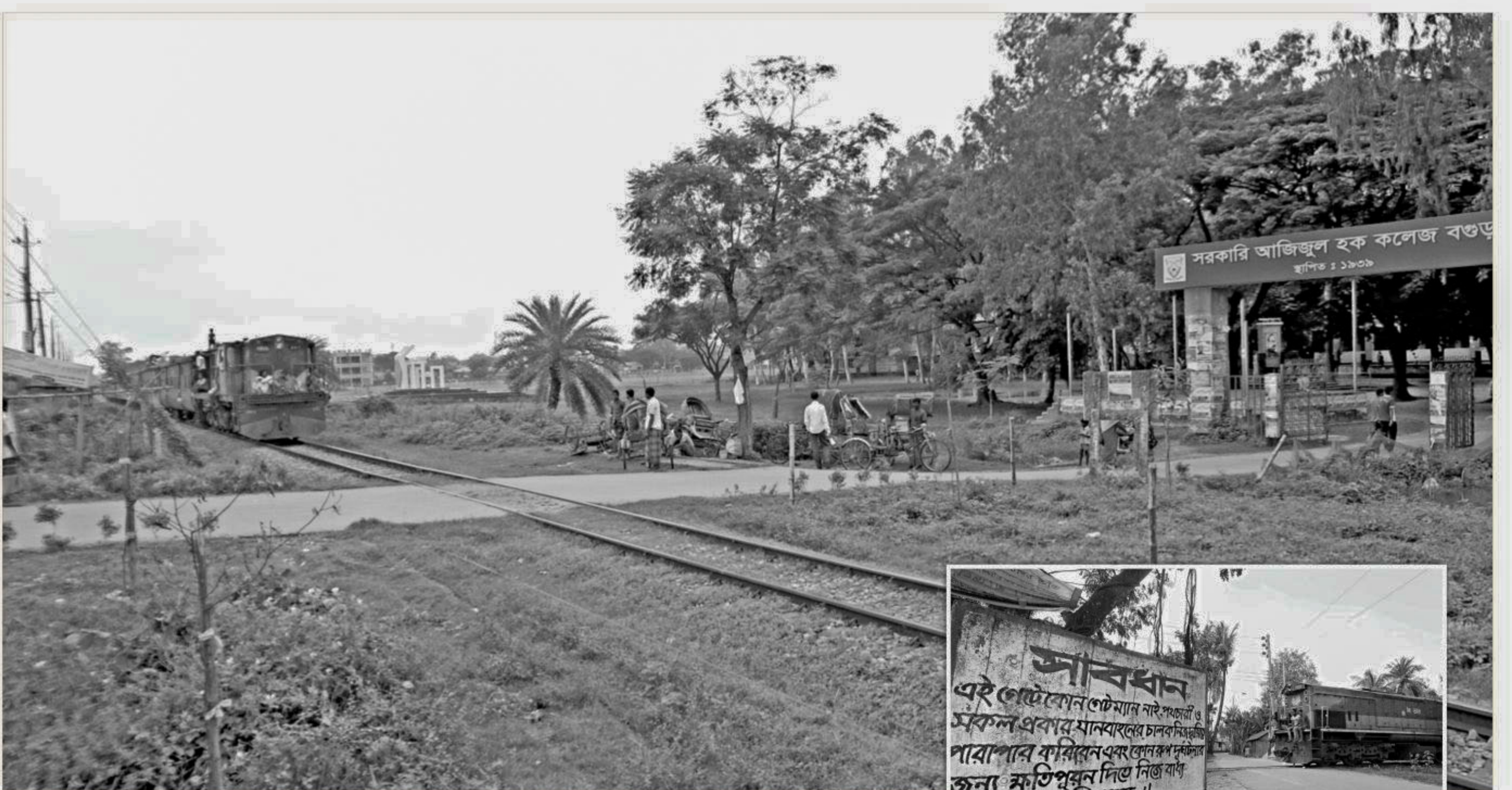


Commission to resolve land disputes only

Says chairman
A CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Land Commission will resolve only the land disputes and work for the people of the hill district. To make the commission more effective, everyone, whether locals or settlers, should extend their helping hands, said Anwarul Haque, chairman of CHT Land Commission. No residents will lose their land following activation of the commission, the chairman said while briefing the journalists at his office in Khagrachhari town yesterday. The stipulated time for submitting applications for land related disputes has already been over, he said. The commission may extend the deadline for submitting the applications in its next meeting if necessary, the chairman added.



Like 16 others in the district, the level crossings near Government Azizul Haque College in Bogra, and inset, Naruli in the town are without any safety arrangement including cross bars and gatemen, posing risk of accidents for commuters and pedestrians. PHOTO: MAMUN-UR-RASHID



Bir Shrestha Hamidur's anniversary of death today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

The 45th death anniversary of Bir Shrestha Hamidur Rahman will be observed today at the memorial complex built in honour of the freedom fighter in Moheshpur upazila. The foundation stone for Hamidur Rahman eco-park on 34 bighas of land adjacent to Hamidur Rahman Degree College will be laid today. Moheshpur upazila administration, employees of Hamidur Rahman Smriti Jadughar and Pathagar and Hamidur Rahman Degree College have taken preparations to observe the day in a significant way. The programme will begin with placing of wreaths at his portrait around 11:30am, where Awami League lawmaker Nabi Nawaz will be present as chief guest. Hamidur Rahman was born in 1945 at Khordakhalishpur village. The ancestral village of the war hero has been renamed Hamid Nagar.

Moneylenders' pressure costs life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Hundreds of villagers formed a human chain on Panchagarh-Chaklahat road in Kekupara village under Panchagarh Sadar upazila yesterday demanding punishment of the moneylenders who allegedly instigated a rickshaw-van puller to commit suicide. The villagers said Abdul Khalek, 25, of the village bought a battery-run rickshaw-van for Tk 52,000 three months ago. Khalek took loan of Tk 35,000 from several moneylenders of the village. During the last several days the moneylenders, especially Suruzzamal, 40, put pressure on him to repay the amount. On Tuesday when Khalek went to Chaklahat bazar on his rickshaw-van, Suruzzamal and the other moneylenders detained him and forced him to sell it for Tk 35,000 to Taherul Islam, 27, one of their accomplices. They also insulted him in front of the people in the bazar. Moneylenders Suruzzamal, Fojo, 40, Saiful, 25, and Naram Mia took the money that Khalek owed them. Suruzzamal gave Khalek only Tk 50 and told him to buy poison and take it. Khalek took the poison at around midnight. Seeing Khalek's condition, his family members took him to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital. He was later taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated. He died there on Wednesday. Victim's wife Mohida Begum filed a case with Panchagarh Police Station, accusing Suruzzamal, 40, Fojo, 40, Saiful, 25, and Taherul. Suruzzamal and other accused could not be contacted as they went into hiding.

18 level crossings unsafe for commuters, pedestrians

The spots in Bogra saw several fatal accidents as there are no gatemen

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Eighteen of the 72 level crossings in 70 km portion of Shantahar-Lalmonirhat rail route in Bogra district pose serious risk of accidents anytime as those are without any gatemen or arrangement for stopping movement of vehicles and pedestrians during the passage of trains. In the district there are 13 railway stations, namely, Shantahar, Adamdighi, Nashratpur, Altafnagar, Talora, Panchpir, Kahaloo, Bogra, Gabtoli, Sukhanpukur, Syed Ahmed College, Bhalerpara and Sonatola. Of the 72 level crossings between Shantahar to Sonatola stations, 54 crossings have arrangement of gatemen and cross bars to stop movement of vehicles across the rail line while the 18 others remain open all the time. Of the unapproved and risky level crossings, four under Bogra, three under Gabtoli, two each under Nashratpur, Talora, and Kahaloo, one each under Adamdighi, Altafnagar, Shukhanpukur, Bhelurpara and Sonatola stations.

A large number of buses, trucks, minibuses, three-wheelers, and pedestrians including thousands of school and college going students daily pass through the risky level crossings at Celopara Horibashor area, before Azizul Haque College gate, Shahardighi and Puran Bogra 24-MW power house in Bogra town. The level crossing at Puran Bogra near 24-MW power house under Bogra station remains vulnerable to accidents any time, said Atiqul Islam, a local school teacher. "I have to cross the level crossing several times daily at Puran Bogra and Azizul Haque college gate amid risk," said Emdadul Haque, a student of Government Azizul Haque College. Several people met tragic death and many others got injured as accidents occurred due to hitting by trains at unsafe level crossings during the last few years, said sources at Government Railway Police. The accidents killed two micro-bus passengers at Sabgram level crossing in 2010, three passengers of a three-wheeler between Gabtoli and

Sukhanpukur in September 2012, two van passengers in Panchpir-Talora rail route area in February 2013, a hawker at Shahardighi on June 20 in 2013, and a woman at Chelopara in September 2013, and four cattle traders near Syed Ahmed College station in December 2013. "The authorities of the Western Zone of Bangladesh Railway (BR) could not deploy adequate gatemen in level crossings due to acute manpower crisis. The 16 up and down trains cross Shantahar-Lalmonirhat rail route in one and a half hours but the number of employees is too small to manage the related tasks properly," said Sajedur Rahman, stationmaster of Gabtoli railway station. "Tender has been called for construction of cross bars and sheds for the guards at the unprotected crossings. The authorities have already published advertisements and process is on to recruit manpower for arrangement of stopping vehicular movements during the passage of trains at the level crossings," said Afzal Hossain, sub-assistant engineer of BR in Bogra.

Ex-chairman beaten in Sunamganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rivals beat up a former chairman of Bangshi Konda Dakkhin union parishad in Dharmapasha upazila of Sunamganj yesterday afternoon. The seriously injured victim, Saidur Rahman was referred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in the evening. Relatives alleged that some people of present Chairman Azim Mahmud made the attack while the latter refuted the allegation and said a group of villagers attacked Saidur over some land dispute. Mazharul Islam, officer-in-charge of Madhyanager Police Station, said, "Men of present Chairman Azim Mahmud hit the former chairman Saidur Rahman with local weapons over a land dispute, causing serious injuries to him. No case has been filed yet."

'Stop construction of Rampal power plant'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A procession of some hundred bicycles was brought out in the town yesterday, protesting construction of Rampal power plant posing a threat of damaging natural resources of the Sundarbans. Organised by Sundarbans Protection Movement Committee in Gaibandha, the procession paraded different streets in the municipality area chanting slogans to stop construction of Rampal power plant. Ahsanul Habib Sayed, member of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports, inaugurated the rally on the Gaibandha Press Club

premises. The speakers at the rally said Rampal power plant should be stopped by any means to protect Sundarbans from destruction. They called upon all to be united for the greater movement in this context. They also threatened to wage tougher movement across the country if immediate steps are not taken to stop construction of the disputed coal-based power plant. Mahabub Alam Milon, convener of Sundarbans Protection Movement Committee, Shamim Ara Meena, president of Chhatra Front and its secretary Paromanada Das spoke at the rally.

Woman murdered, husband arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A woman was found murdered in Modhukhali upazila of the district yesterday. Police arrested her husband Nitya Mandol, 28, a salesman of a pharmacy in the area, from Faridpur town in this connection. Nitya lived with her wife Modhumala Bala, 22, and their two-year-old son at Joader market in the upazila. On information, police recovered the body from the house and sent it to Faridpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Md Ruhul Amin, office-in-charge of Modhukhali Police Station, adding that scratch marks were seen around her throat. The victim's mother Suchitra Bala said Nitya often tortured her daughter over family feuds. The arrestee might have strangled Modhumala, the OC said, adding that a murder case was filed, accusing Nitya.



A farmer looks sorrowfully at the Dharla river that devoured his vegetable field in Baparitari village in Mogholhat union under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. PHOTO: S DILIP ROY



The Sundarbans Protection Movement Committee in Gaibandha held a bicycle procession in the town yesterday, protesting construction of Rampal power plant. PHOTO: STAR

Youth held with fake Indian notes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a youth with counterfeit Indian currencies worth Rs 7 lakh from Laharpur village in Shibganj upazila on Wednesday. The arrestee was identified as Sumon Ali, 28, son of Hazrat Ali of Kalabari village in the upazila. The elite force members of Chapainawabganj camp, acting on a tip-off, conducted a drive at the village and arrested Sumon with the fake notes around 1:30pm, said ASP Nur-e-Alam of Rab-5. The arrestee was handed over to Shibganj Police Station the same afternoon, the ASP added.

Farmers' future bleak

Dharla river erosion makes 400 farmers landless in three weeks

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Selim Miah, 48, a vegetable grower at Baparitari village in Mogholhat under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila was seen in deep thought beside the river embankment as his seven bighas of land with different vegetables, mainly cauliflower, were devoured by the Dharla river in the last five days, while two bighas are at risk of being washed away anytime. He said he used to earn around Tk 5 lakh from farming vegetables on the lands round the year, now he does not know how he will support his family. "We have taken shelter on the road as our homestead was devoured," he added. Sudhir Chandra Barman, 56, of the village said he was removing brinjal seedlings to a safe place as his land full of vegetables was devoured by the Dharla. "I would have got the brinjal from the field within a week, but the Dharla devoured the land," he said, adding they have taken shelter on the road after losing their lands and homesteads. "Erosion by the Dharla has snatched away our dreams, hopes, future planning as we have lost our arable lands and homesteads in the last few days," said vegetable grower Nazrul Islam, 58, of Kurul village. Union Parishad (UP) member Nazrul Islam Bhutta said at least 400 farmers have become landless as about 900 bighas of land with different vegetables, and even their homesteads, have been devoured by the Dharla at three villages in the last three weeks. Mogholhat UP chairman Habibur Rahman said a good numbers of farmers of four villages in his union are under threat of losing their lands with vegetables as the Dharla continues washing away land. Sub-Divisional Engineer of Water Development Board WDB in Lalmonirhat Md Al-Mamun said the Dharla has been eroding croplands, homesteads, orchards at different villages in Mogholhat and Kulaghat unions under Lalmonirhat sadar. Taking help of local people, WDB officials are trying to check the erosion temporarily with bamboo piling, he added.