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SANTAL COMMUNITY

Exploited throughout history

MOYUKH MAHTAB

In 1855, tens of thousands of Santals, one of the oldest communities to make their home in Bengal, rose up in open rebellion. The Santal hool or revolution would mark one of the major milestones in the history of peasant rebellions against the British colonial administration. Choking under the pressure of practical serfdom due to the mahajani system, with no recourse to the law and administration, the Santals demanded autonomy.

But, the Santals have always been a peace-loving agrarian people, who lived in and depended on forests. Historical texts describe them as being honest to the extent of naïveté. That, and their low literacy made them easy victims to corrupt money-lending practices.

Their lands were forcibly taken, they were lent money at exorbitant rates which they could never repay, they were forced into bonded labour, and generation after generation of Santals had to live as serfs, cultivating the zamindar's land for little food and clothes.

Many had no other recourse than to work for Indigo planters or for the frenzy of railway constructions that the British initiated.

With no written documents, the history of the Santals is disputed. Experts differ on when precisely they had come to

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A Santal woman cooks on an earthen stove in the open fuelling the stove with dry leaves near the Rangpur Sugar Mills farmland in Madarpur of Gobindaganj in Gaibandha on Victory Day. Many Santals have been evicted from the land which they claim belong to them. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PROBLEM IN PM'S PLANE Biman to file criminal case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities would file a criminal case in connection with any wrongdoing by people concerned that resulted in the emergency landing of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's aircraft in Hungary.

The VVIP flight carrying the premier made the emergency landing following a technical glitch on November 27.

"All three probe committees have found that the fault was caused by human or human factor error, but it is not clear if that was intentional," Civil Aviation and

Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon told a briefing yesterday.

He added the probe committees formed to investigate the incident could not find out if it was an act of sabotage. "So, a criminal case will be filed so that investigators can unearth if it was sabotage," he said.

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IS blast kills 48 Yemeni troops

84 others wounded; suicide bomber targets servicemen who had gathered to receive their salaries near a base

AFP, Aden

A suicide bomber from the Islamic State group killed at least 48 Yemeni soldiers in Aden yesterday, the latest in a string of deadly attacks against recruits in the country's second city.

Military officials and medics said dozens more were wounded in the attack that targeted a crowd of servicemen who had gathered to collect their salaries near a base in northeastern Aden.

The number of those killed has risen to 48, while 84 others were wounded, Aden health chief Abdel Nasser al-Wali told AFP.

Wali had initially given a toll of 40 dead, warning that the number was likely to increase due to "critical cases."

The attack was carried out by a suicide bomber who blended in among soldiers crowding outside the house of the head of special security forces in Aden, Colonel Nasser Sarea, in Al-Arish district, near Al-Sawlaban base.

Sarea said the bomber "took advantage of the gathering and detonated

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DISTRICT COUNCIL POLLS
MPs asked to explain polls code violations

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR
TOPU, Pabna

Two ruling party lawmakers of Pabna were served show-cause notices yesterday for violating electoral code of conduct in the upcoming district council elections slated for December 28.

The returning officer of Pabna issued the notices upon Golam Faruk Khandaker Prince of Pabna-5 constituency and Mokbul Hossain of Pabna-3 for campaigning for an Awami League-supported chairman candidate.

As per the electoral code of conduct, the Speaker, MPs, ministers, city

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Nasa: asteroid strike overdue

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Planet Earth is effectively defenceless in the face of a "dinosaur-killer" asteroid strike, a Nasa scientist has warned.

And the planet is overdue for an extinction-level event involving a giant space object – such as an asteroid or comet – following a number of close encounters over the last 20 years, Dr Joseph Nuth said.

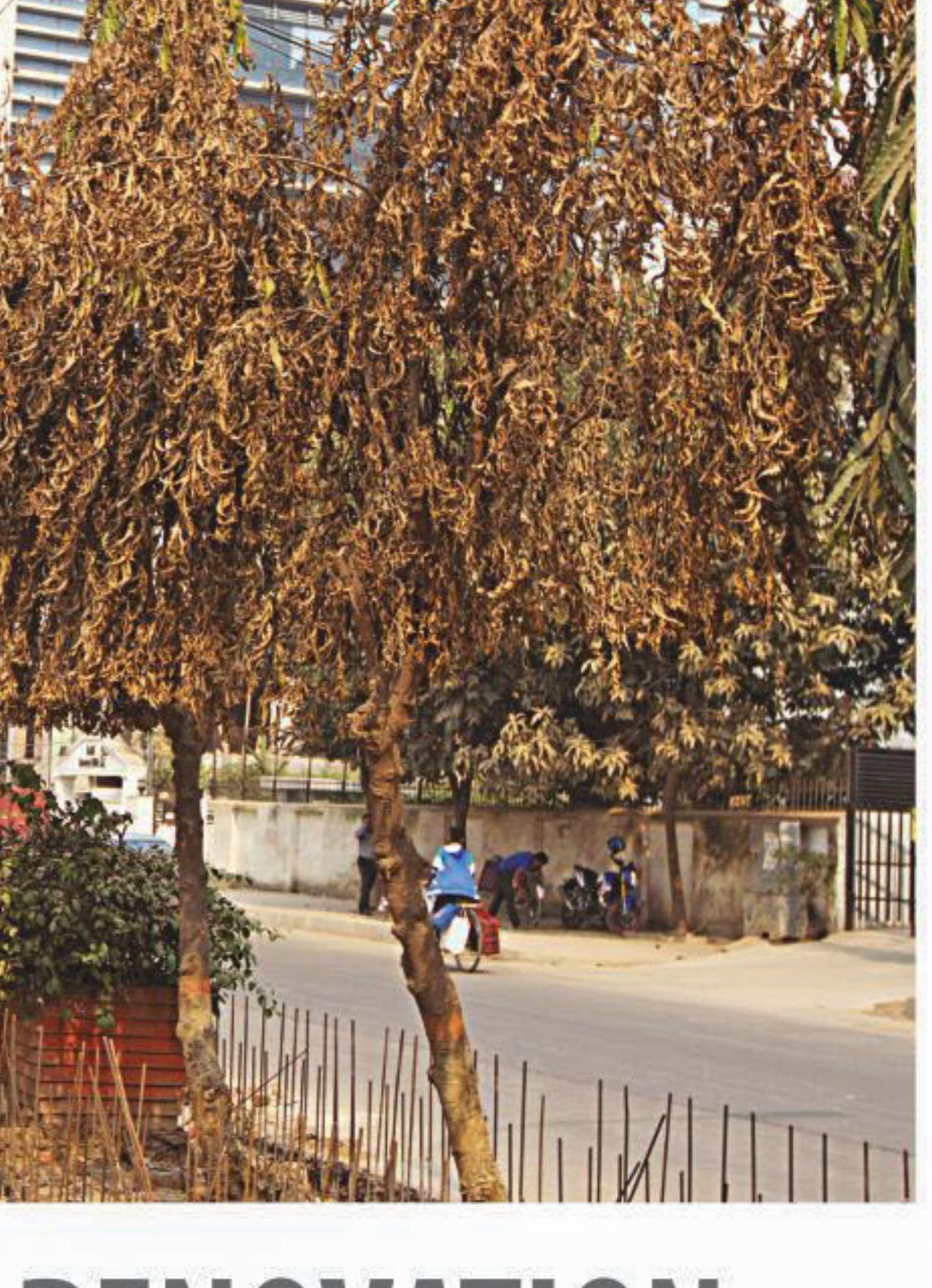
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'Discovered by chance'
Suggests new research on Anne Frank

AFP, The Hague

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RENOVATION KILLING TREES

Trees on the central reservation of the capital's Gulshan Avenue, between Gulshan-1 and -2, are on the verge of dying as renovation work is going on on the median strip. Some of the trees have already died. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO:
SK ENAMUL HAQ



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 19
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-20 12-45 3-45 5-22 7-00
JAMAAT 5-55 1-15 4-00 5-25 7-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

ALEPOO CRISIS Evacuation suspended

5 buses for rescuing people from Shia villages attacked

AGENCIES

The evacuations expected Sunday of fighters and civilians from east Aleppo and two Shia villages under rebel siege in northwestern Syria have been postponed until further notice, a monitor said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the move was decided after gunmen attacked buses sent to evacuate people from the villages of Fuua and Kafra and in the "absence of security

guarantees for the evacuees".

One of the bus drivers was killed in the incident, the Observatory said.

Yasser al-Youssef of the Nureddin al-Zinki rebel group confirmed that "the evacuations have been momentarily suspended".

The Observatory said buses would not leave the rebel areas of Aleppo until residents of Fuua and Kafra were also able to leave, reports AFP.

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