

Unusual train halt creates traffic jam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A fertiliser carrying train remained stranded for half an hour in the middle of the town between Bogra station to Chelopara Bridge area, much to the sufferings of commuters yesterday.

Around 11:00am, the Kurigram-bound train from Chittagong suddenly halted at the spot that sees an upward slope before the bridge, said railway officials and locals.

Later the railway authorities arranged an extra engine that carefully drew the train to the other end of Chelopara Bridge and the train moved smoothly afterwards, they said.

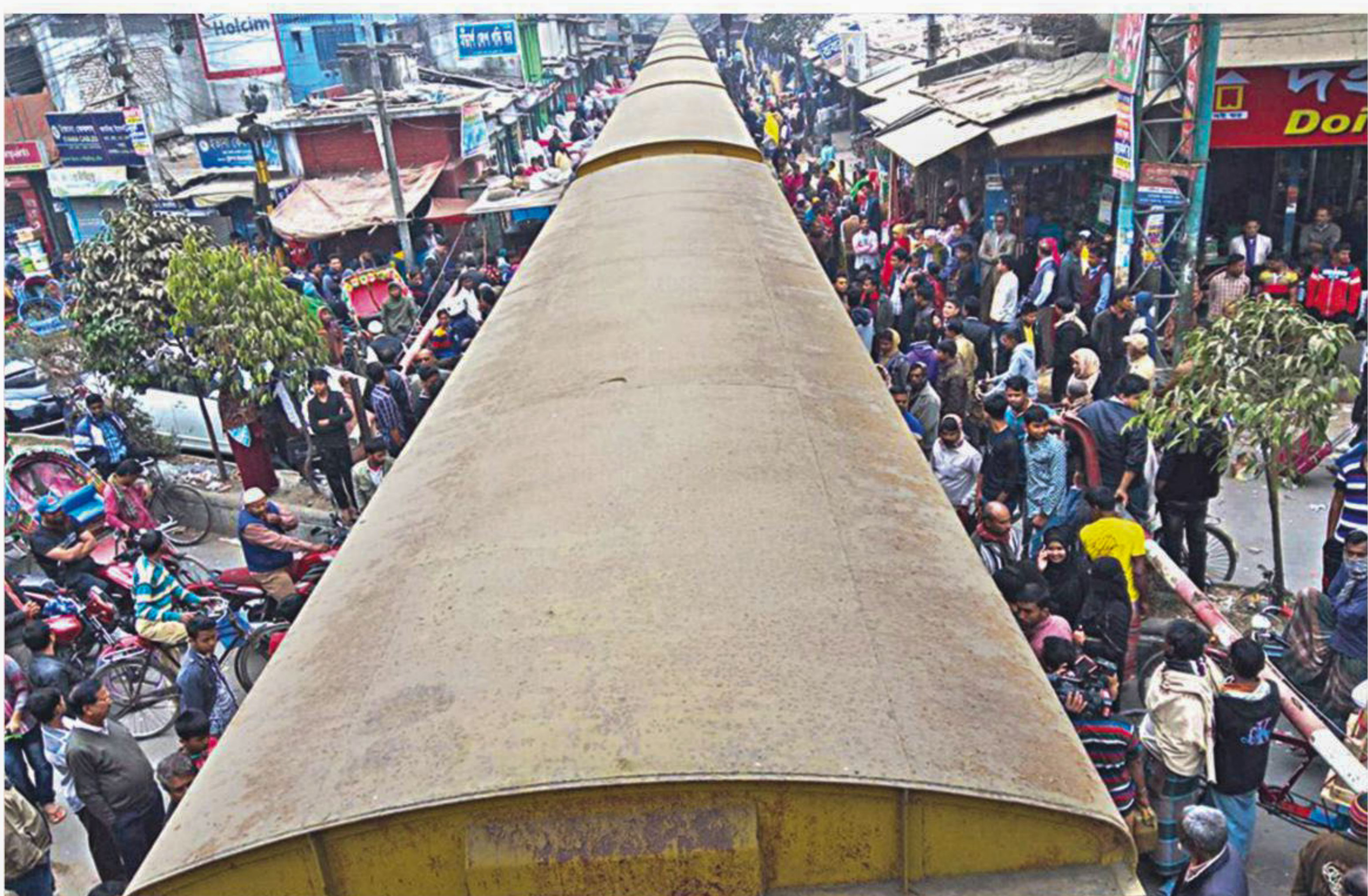
The situation during the busy hours caused serious traffic jam and immense sufferings of the people.

"My mother was suffering from breathing problem since morning and I accompanied to take her to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogra. But we got stuck on the way due to the unusual train halt," said Aslam Hossain of Borogola in Bogra town.

Several others including local trader Abdul Ali and rickshaw puller Ashish Kumar told about their sufferings due to the train halt at a level crossing in the town.

Afzal Hossain, sub-assistant engineer of railway, and Benjural Islam, stationmaster of Bogra station, said overload of the train, trouble in its engine and upward sloping of the track in the area might cause the problem.

The railway personnel took quick steps to restart the train, they said.



This fertiliser carrying train remained stranded for nearly half an hour at a busy level crossing in Bogra town yesterday, causing serious traffic congestions in the area. The railway authorities took quick steps to draw the train from there with the help of an extra engine. PHOTO: STAR

College girl's abduction sparks protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Abduction of an HSC examinee by her stalker sparks protest.

On Sunday, the 17-year-old girl of Holy Child International School and College in Dapunia of Mymensingh Sadar, was abducted when she was on way to attend coaching classes at the college.

Sarwar Hossain and his men from Kosaibari area took the girl into a microbus and fled the scene, police said.

Soon after the incident, teachers and students of the institution gave a 24-hour ultimatum to arrest the abductors and rescue the girl but police failed to do so.

Protesting the abduction, they blocked Mymensingh-Phubaria road for about two hours at Dapunia on Monday.

Later, the protestors withdrew the blockade following an assurance by police of taking steps to arrest the criminals within three days.

Quoting the girl's family members, Md Nazmul Hossen, principal of the college, said Sarwar, son of Abdul Kadir of the area, used to tease the girl for long.

Due to continuous harassment, a local arbitration was held two months ago that warned Sarwar not to tease the girl, but Sarwar did not bother, said the teacher.

Saiful Islam Mandal, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station, said they detained four people including Monir Hossain, driver of the microbus used in the abduction, for interrogation.

Raids are on to arrest prime accused Sarwar, said the SI, also investigation officer of the case.

Meanwhile, the teachers and students warned of going for fresh movement as a deadline given by police will expire today.

Witness to Satidaha



HISTORIC TOMBS IN RUINS: Five tombs with mortal remains of the victims of Satidaha, a long abandoned practice of burning Hindu widows with the bodies of their deceased husbands, lie in utter neglect in front of Ansar and VDP office at Kumarkhali in Pirojpur town. PHOTO: STAR

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Five tombs of the victims of Satidaha, a long abandoned practice of burning Hindu widows along with their deceased husbands, still exist in front of Pirojpur District Ansar and VDP office at Kumarkhali in Pirojpur municipality area.

However, the reminders of a black chapter of Indian history, are getting ruined due to lack of proper steps for preservation.

Three of the tombs are already broken from top and another one is badly damaged.

In 1829, the then British government in India declared Satidaha illegal and punishable, following movements by humanitarian social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

Identity inscribed in a tomb shows that the victims were from local Majumdar family and the year mentioned there shows that the Satidaha was done after around 40 years of its ban by the British government.

However, not much could be known about them as the family left the country

during the partition of Indian sub-continent between India and Pakistan in 1947 and there was hardly any step to preserve the tombs and their history.

"Had I been burnt with my late husband ten years ago, who would look after my two kids?" said Maloti Rani, 40, of Kalibari in Nazirpur upazila under the district, referring to Satidaha.

Another widow Kanika Mondal, 40, who lost her husband 13 years ago, said, "When my husband died my daughter was only five years old. What would happen to her if I were burnt with my husband's body?"

Like the two women, many others came to know about Satidaha from their forefathers.

Muhammad Shahin Reza, assistant professor of history at Government Suhrawardi College in Pirojpur, has urged taking steps to preserve the rare signs of Satidaha to inform the coming generations of the black history.

He also urged inclusion of the incident in textbooks and conducting research on the matter.

LAND FEUD WITH LOCAL CHAIRMAN SSC examinee seeks security at centre

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

An SSC examinee, at a press briefing yesterday, sought security of his family members and also in the examination centre as the chairman of a union parishad has allegedly threatened to prevent him from taking the examinations.

The examinee is Abu Bakkar Siddik, 15, son of Ramjan Ali of Alora village in Paikar union under Kahaloo upazila of the district. He is a student at Alora High School.

Bakkar's father Ramzan Ali said he bought land in Alora village in 1993 and built a house there. He started building a shop and boundary wall a

few months ago, but chairman of Paikar Union Parishad Mithu Chowdhury protested the erection.

Mithu and his men attacked his house on December 21, 2016, Ramzan alleged, adding that he filed a case against them at that time.

They fled from the village as the chairman allegedly threatened Bakkar that he would prevent him from appearing in the SSC examinations.

Mithu rejected the allegation against him. He said he had a feud over the case with Ramzan but not with Bakkar.

Superintendent of Police in Bogra Md Asaduzzaman said security has been ensured for Bakkar and his family members.

Frequent outage Townspeople besiege Gaibandha power office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Townspeople brought out a procession and besieged local Power Development Board (PDB) office yesterday protesting massive irregularities, frequent power outage and ghost bills.

The speakers at the rally said a section of PDB employees have been involved in preparing ghost bills of high amount that became unbearable for the innocent consumers.

They said PDB continued submitting bills against the owners of irrigation pumps after disconnecting power lines of irrigation pumps and compelled them to pay such bills.

They also said a section of officials created load-shedding at their will without any prior information to cover up huge power system loss.

The speakers demanded mitigation of the sufferings of power consumers immediately. Otherwise the authorities will have to face greater agitation in near future, they said.

Orange-fleshed sweet potato gets popular in Kurigram

ABDUL WAHED, Kurigram

Orange fleshed-sweet potato is being cultivated for the first time in the district's char areas.

About 1,200 farmers of Mokalbaha, Pachgachhi and Kurigram municipalities under Sadar upazila of the district are cultivating the sweet potato on 50 acres of land in various char areas, while an official of the International Potato Centre (CIP) is advising them.

First, branch-seeds are produced in the loamy land, and then they are planted in char lands. Farmer Nur Islam, 45, of Char Shitaijhar village in Mokalbasha union said, "I planted branch-seeds of the sweet potato in my ten decimals of land in

August last year at a cost of Tk 600 and sold the branch-seeds for Tk 1,300. I am expecting 15 maunds of sweet potato from the land."

"The orange-fleshed sweet potato is being sold at Tk 800 per maund while other varieties of sweet potato are being sold at Tk 600 per maund. I shall cultivate it in 50 decimals of land next year as it is a profitable crop," he added.

Mizanur Rahman, 31, of Pangarchar village under Kurigram municipality said, "In August last year I planted branch-seeds in 1.5 acres of land where no crop would be cultivated before this. I spent around Tk 50,000 and sold the branch-seeds for Tk 80,000. "I have already sold sweet potato for Tk

20,000 and will complete harvesting in the last week of February. I am expecting production of 150 maunds more," said Mizanur.

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) first released two varieties -- Bari SP-4 and Bari SP-8 -- of the orange-fleshed sweet potato in 1994, but it was brought to the district in 2016.

Kurigram Civil Surgeon Dr Aminul Islam said, "The orange-fleshed sweet potato is a nourishing food containing vitamin A. Everyone, including diabetics patients, can take it."

Field Coordinator of CIP in Kurigram Mohidul Hasan said, "To reduce pressure on rice, ensure nutrition and increase income for poor people in char areas, the CIP

has started work on cultivation of orange-fleshed sweet potato here. Diabetes and diarrhoea can be controlled through taking the sweet potato. Besides, poor farmers could be benefited by cultivating it."

Kurigram Sadar Upazila Agriculture Officer Mohammad Kamruzzaman said people could overcome nutrition deficiency by eating the orange-fleshed sweet potato as it contains nutrients and vitamin A.

"Its output is better than other sweet potatoes. We are motivating people to cultivate the orange-fleshed sweet potato where other crops are not cultivated so they can get nutrition and be benefited economically," said Kamruzzaman.

Youth to die in schoolgirl Konika Rani murder

3 injured classmates sit for SSC exams today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A court here sentenced a youth to death on Tuesday for killing schoolgirl Konika in the district.

Judge of the Juvenile Court Ziaur Rahman handed down the verdict in presence of the youth after examining 21 prosecution witnesses and relevant documents.

The convict is Abdul Malek, 28, son of Abdul Latif of Diar Dhainagar village under Sadar upazila.

Public Prosecutor Jobdul Haque said the court also awarded him three years rigorous imprisonment (RI) under Section 324, 10 years RI and fine of Tk 5,000, in default, he will have to suffer three months more RI, under Section 326, and 10 years RI and fine of Tk 5,000, in default, he will have to suffer three months more RI, under Section 307, for seriously injuring three other girl students.

Sub-Inspector Mahmudur Rashid submitted the charge sheet to the court on October 7 in 2016.

According to the prosecution, schoolgirl Konika Rani, 14, daughter of late Laxman Ghosh of Mohipur village, was hacked to death and three other girls were injured by a youth in the area. Konika was a Class X student of Mohipur SM Dwimukhi High School.

The injured are Tarin Afroz, 15, daughter of Abdul Khalek of Diar-Dhainagar,

Five youths get life for killing kid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Habiganj court yesterday sentenced five youths to life term imprisonment for killing a kid over previous enmity.

Habiganj Additional District and Sessions Judge Mafuza Pervin handed down the verdict, said Public Prosecutor advocate Saleh Ahmed. The court acquitted eight people as the allegations against them could not be proven, he added.

The convicts are Helal Uddin Turkey, 18, Rony Mia, 19, Saddam Mia, 18, Nijah Ahmed, 18, and Akther Mia, 20, all of Shamoly area in the district town. According to the prosecution, they killed school-boy Tokir over previous enmity on September 24, 2009.

Victim's father Abdul Barik filed a case, accusing 12 people, with Habiganj Police Station. Police submitted charge sheet against 13 people, including Helal, Rony, Saddam, Nijah and Akther.



Farmer Nur Islam shows orange-fleshed sweet potato at his field in Char Shitaijhar village of Mokalbasha union under Kurigram Sadar upazila. PHOTO: STAR