

## Confinement of five PSTU students protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Students of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) brought out a procession on the campus yesterday, protesting detention of five students on February 14 and demanding immediate arrest of the culprits.

The procession started from the academic building and ended in front of Joy Bangla square. Later, they held a street corner meeting that was addressed by Anik, Shuvo Saha, Shakil, Nirob and Niloy, all students of PSTU.

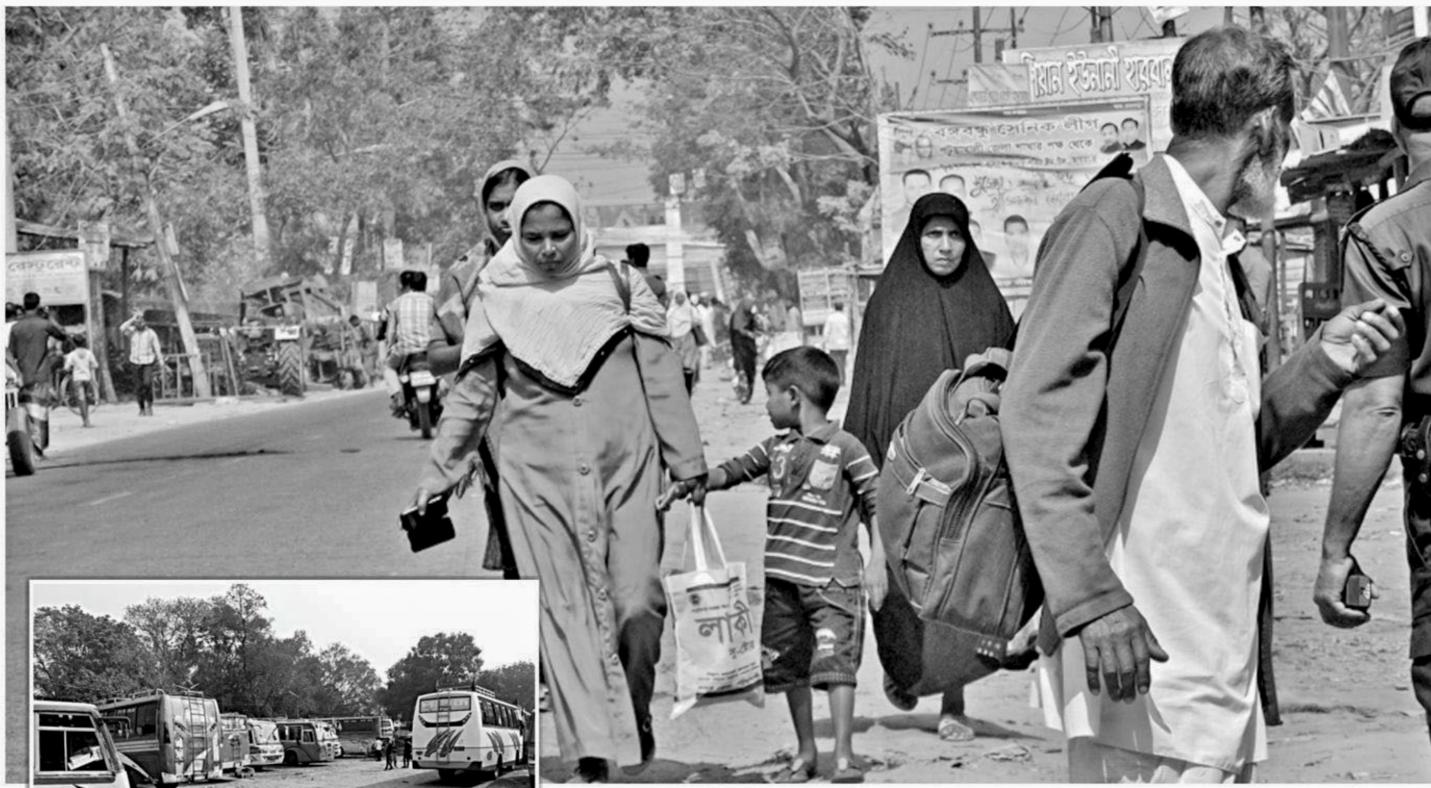
The speakers said Ali Adnan, Shaon Kumer Bain, Shibajee Mondol, Irteja and Mostaq Hasan of Masters final year went to Paira river bank in Nalua village under Bakerganj upazila of Barisal on February 14. There was a girl friend with them.

A gang of about 10 to 12 members led by Abdul Azim, son of former Nalua UP chairman Harun-ur-Rashid, stopped them while they were returning to PSTU in the evening, said Ali Adnan, adding that some Chattr League men of Dumki also joined Azim. The gang snatched seven cellphones from them, alleged Adnan.

On information, a team from PSTU went to the spot and freed the students with the help of locals. They also recovered three cellphones from Azim.

Azim said he went there to rescue them and took the phones from Sajib, a BCL leader of Dumki upazila unit.

Some Dumki upazila unit BCL men were involved in the matter, said Abul Hossen, Secretary of Dumki upazila unit of Swachhasebok League.



With buses staying off Patuakhali roads during an indefinite strike, commuters start walking near Patuakhali central bus stand yesterday. Inset, buses are seen in the stand following an indefinite strike called by transport owners in Thakurgaon.

PHOTO: STAR

## BUS STRIKE IN FOUR DISTRICTS

# Tourists at Kuakata stranded

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Transport owners and workers went on an indefinite strike in four districts yesterday, causing immense sufferings to passengers.

Road communication between Dhaka and three southern districts was suspended due to the indefinite strike, reports our Patuakhali correspondent.

Bus owners of Patuakhali, Barguna and Barisal called the strike demanding a stop to plying of three-wheelers on the highways.

They also demanded immediate release of all 17 bus workers who were arrested following a clash between bus workers and three-wheeler drivers at Amtali Chowrasta on Patuakhali-Kuakata road on Monday, said Reaz Uddin, president of Patuakhali Bus-Minibus Owners' Association.

Passengers, especially tourists at

Kuakata beach, have remained stranded since the strike.

Moslem Ali, a passenger who went to Mohipur from Dhaka, said, "I reached Patuakhali bus stand early in the morning and can't go to Mohipur."

Lailee Begum, who came to visit the sea beach with her family, said "When I reached the bus stand in the morning for getting a Dhaka-bound bus, I fell in a great trouble due to the strike."

Immediate steps will be taken to stop plying of three wheelers on highways, said Bijoy Bashak, superintendent of police in Barguna.

Meanwhile, Thakurgaon Transport Owners' Association and Thakurgaon Transport Workers' Union jointly began an indefinite strike halting services on the internal routes in the district from yesterday morning, reports our correspondent.

The strike followed vandalism of

an outpost for collecting toll set up by the Thakurgaon Transport Owners' Association in Thakurgaon bus terminal area.

Members of their rival organisations Thakurgaon Truck, Tank Lorry and Covered Van Workers' Union and Thakurgaon Truck Owners' Association vandalised the toll outpost on Wednesday evening protesting collection of toll from trucks.

The sudden bus strike caused untold suffering to the commuters.

President of Thakurgaon Transport Workers' Association Habibur Islam Bablu said, "We are the government registered organisation and collect toll as per government rules. But our rival organisation is collecting toll of their own ignoring rules."

President of Thakurgaon Truck, Tank lorry and Covered van Workers' Union Join Uddin said the transport owners' association is illegally collecting toll from trucks.

# Jhenidah farmer finds fortune in Thai plum

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Cultivating Thai variety of plums has brought good profit to a grower in the district, who is now leading a happy life with his family.

The grower Abdul Alim is son of Hamiz Uddin of Debipur village under Chowgachha upazila of Jessore. He grows the fruit on leased land at Narendrapur village under Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah.

Alim told this correspondent that he has been farming the plums for eight years and makes very good profit. He has built a brick house and purchased a motorbike, some plots of land and a solar power system, and has also saved money in a bank. The Thai variety has brought about a radical change in his life, he added.

Alim said he cultivated plums on 8.2 bighas of land at a cost of Tk 3.4 lakh this season, and earned Tk 2 lakh up to the end of January. He added that he will get profit

of Tk 1.5 lakh this year if the weather is favourable up to March. Each plant bears three to four maunds per year, adding that he is selling the plums at Tk 20 to Tk 25 per kg this year.

Most growers harvest immature plums for getting quick benefit, so the price normally comes down due to lower quality, Alim said. If a cold-storage plant is set up in the upazila, the plum growers will get good prices, he added.

Aslam Hossain said he has been growing this plum seeing Alim's success. He cultivated plums on one bigha of land at a cost of Tk 50 thousand and has sold Tk 30 thousand worth of the crop up to end of January. He expects to sell the rest for Tk 1 lakh if the weather is good.

Akram Hossain said he cultivated the fruit on 15 decimals of land this year at a cost of Tk 30 thousand, adding that he will get profit of Tk 50 thousand, which is quite impossible by farming traditional crops.

# Reminiscence of days of 1952

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

"In my twilight years, I am still invited at Ekushe February programmes every year. It gives me great satisfaction to see February 21 observed as International Mother Language Day," said Language Movement veteran Md Nurul Islam Khan alias Hydar, sitting at his residence at Arappur village in the district town.

"I got involved in the Language Movement in 1952 at the age of 17 when I was a student of Class X at the local English High School (now Jhenidah Government Boys' School)," Hydar, now 80, said recalling the memory of his activities during the turbulent days.

Student leaders Enamul Haque Koton and Anwar Zahid from Dhaka went to Jhenidah started organising the local students for the movement. Golzer Hossain played a vital role there. Renowned school teacher Murari Mohan Ghoshal helped the

students to form a 21-member committee titled 'Chhatra Sangram Parishad' with Golzer Hossain and Anwar Zahid as president and general secretary. School teacher Dharendra Nath Sarker was also in

government officials to keep their offices shut to press home the demand for Bangla as one of the state languages.

They also launched a campaign to motivate students to join the Language Movement.

When they arrived near Siddiqia Madrasa in the town to call the students to participate in the procession boycotting the classes, a teacher and some students barred their way.

On February 21, a huge procession led by Anwar Zahid and Golzer Hossain was brought out in the town. Amulya Kumar of Krishna

Nagarpara got engaged in drumbeating to attract the people's attention and motivate them to join the procession.

Hydar, however, expressed concern, saying that now a large section of the students are too much involved with political parties and many of them are staying away from the basic ideals of learners.



Jahid Hasan Amir Hossain Nurul Islam

the committee.

"Awami League leader and renowned physician Dr K Ahmed and his wife schoolteacher Monwara Khatun encouraged us. We used their house for poster writing and other purposes. Jahid Hasan Musa and Amir Hossain Malitha also played key role in language movement in Jhenidah," Hydersaid.

On February 19, the committee members started convincing the



Abdul Alim at his Thai plum garden at Narendrapur village in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah.

PHOTO: STAR



Like three others at different places of Lalmonirhat, this sluice gate at Sakoya village in Aditmari upazila under the district is lying inoperative for years. Local Government Engineering Department is responsible for maintenance of the sluice gates set up to ensure irrigation for IRRI-boro cultivation in the areas.

PHOTO: STAR

# LGED's sluice gates lying inoperative for years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Four sluice gates under Local Government Engineering Department's (LGED) Small Water Resource Development Sector Project at four upazilas in the district have been inoperative for years due to lack of proper maintenance.

The sluice gates were built 10 years ago to ensure supply of irrigation water for farming IRRI-boro during the dry period, but they have not been used for the last seven years, although LGED spent government funds for their maintenance every year.

They are situated at Boarderhat village in Hatibandha upazila, Bhakari village in Kaliganj upazila, Sakoya village in Aditmari upazila and Kodalkhata village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

Farmer Mobarok Hossain, 55, of Bhakari village said the sluice gate in the village has been inoperative for nearly eight years. "During the first two years of its construction we got benefit as the sluice gate was operated properly," he added.

Shamsul Islam, 48, of Sakoya village in Aditmari upazila said if the sluice gate is operated properly the local farmers would

be benefited during IRRI-boro season.

Monitoring Officer and Socio Economist of LGED's Small Water Resource Development Sector Project Rafiqul Islam said there are four committees of beneficiary farmers to operate these four sluice gates. There are 10 members in the executive body and 200 to 300 general members in each committee.

President of Sakoya Small Water Resource Development Sector Project management committee of Aditmari upazila Mukul Miah said they cannot operate the sluice gate properly as many farmers cultivate IRRI-boro in the canal. Lack of dredging of the canal for years has caused the bed to rise, so water overflows when the sluices are closed, he added.

Kodalkhata committee President Abul Hossain said they want the sluice gates to be operated properly, but some local farmers who cultivate paddy in the canal resist it.

Rafiqul Islam said LGED spends Tk 20 thousand for maintaining each sluice gate, but not regularly. "We always ask the committee members to operate the sluice gates, but they keep them inoperative due to local problems," he said, adding that steps would be taken soon for operating the sluice gates.

## MP LITON MURDER Mastermind to be held soon

Says Rangpur DIG

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The mastermind behind lawmaker Manzurul Islam Liton murder in Gaibandha's Sundarganj upazila will be arrested soon, said Khandakar Golam Faruk, deputy inspector general (DIG) of Rangpur range.

The DIG said this at a meeting when he was inaugurating a CCTV camera installation programme in DC Mor area of Rangpur city yesterday.

Police are still clueless about the killing of the lawmaker who was shot dead by some unknown assailants inside his home in Sundarganj on December 31.

Police need extra time to unveil any clueless killing, said the DIG.

Citing Japanese national Kunio Hoshi murder case as an example of a clueless murder case, the DIG hoped that police will solve the lawmaker murder case properly.

PHOTO: STAR

## Tk 4 lakh Indian tea seized

One arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a man with two tonnes of Indian tea worth about Tk 4 lakh from Salkona Gatipara in Sharsha upazila of Jessore on Wednesday night.

The arrestee is Babul Hossain, son of Abdur Rahman of Salkona Gatipara village in the upazila, said sources at Rab-6.

Acting on a tip-off, the elite force raided the area and arrested Babul with the Indian tea. The seized tea was later deposited to Jessore Customs godown.

A case was filed in this connection.