

Train derails in Dinajpur

Stationmaster, point man suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A stationmaster and his point man have been suspended for their alleged negligence after a Demu train derailed in Biral upazila of the district on Sunday night.

They are stationmaster Idris Ali and point man Khademul Islam of Kanchan Railway Station.

A four-member committee was formed to investigate the incident, said Golam Mostafa, station super of Dinajpur Railway Station.

Mostafa said the Demu train derailed due to wrong signal when it was crossing Kanchan station around 9:30pm.

Rail communication between Lalmonirhat and Panchagarh remained suspended for 13 hours and was restored around 11:00am yesterday, said railway officials.

Rail link with Sylhet restored

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Rail communication between Sylhet and other parts of the country was restored yesterday.

Communication was halted on March 30 as heavy rain eroded the earth under the tracks near Bridge-55 at Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj.

Realising the danger, the railway authorities halted train service on the routes, said Saiful Islam, stationmaster of Shaistaganj.

Assistant Executive Engineer of Bangladesh Railway in Sylhet division Mujibur Rahman said the services were suspended to avoid any mishap.



The indigenous people have been living a sub-human life since they were evicted in Babuchhara area of Khagrachhari after construction of a BGB camp in June 2014.

PHOTO: STAR

MEETING WITH BGB OFFICIALS

Evicted indigenous people see hope

SAIKAT DEWAN, Khagrachhari

There is a ray of hope that an initiative will be taken to rehabilitate 21 indigenous families evicted in Babuchhara of Khagrachhari for construction of BGB-51 Battalion camp over a couple of years ago.

The evicted families are hopeful about the initiative as their representatives and local people's representatives held a meeting with the officials of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) on March 13. Both sides are now hopeful about a solution to the problem.

Chandra Ranjan Chakma, chairman of Dighinala Union Parishad, said besides the evicted families, 10 other families were affected due to setting up of the camp.

"We have demanded rehabilitation of the 21 families and

compensation to the 10 affected affected families. We are hopeful that the initiative going to be taken by BGB will solve the problem".

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent found that the 21 families have been living for more than two years in an abandoned tin shed house and a shanty owned by the agriculture department beside Dighinala-Babuchhara road. The families were evicted on June 10 in 2014.

After being evicted, they took shelter at nearby Babuchhara High School. Three months later they shifted to their present shelter and since then they have been living a sub-human life there.

Shantosh Kumar Chakma, (Karbari) head of Shashimohan Para, said due to war-like situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts, he took

shelter in Pancharam Refugee camp in Tripura in 1989. Following an agreement between Bangladesh government and the representatives of the refugees, he returned in 1998. In 2014, he was again evicted and now he is homeless in own country.

They are now living a sub-human life since the eviction, he said.

Dighinala upazila Chairman Naba Kamol Chakma said, "Seeing the present attitude of BGB I am hopeful that a way to solve the problem will be found soon. I am maintaining contact with both sides".

Lt Col Md Iqbal Hossain, commander of BGB-51 Battalion, said some misunderstanding may have arisen between the BGB and local people during setting up of the camp.

They sent a proposal to the BGB director general to rehabilitate the families considering the issue from a humanitarian angle, he said.

The battalion commander also said, "We hope to find a positive outcome soon."

BGB-51 Babuchhara Battalion was formed on May 18 in 2013. Some 45 acres of land were acquired for the purpose. Indigenous people of three paras were affected by it.

Although the indigenous people have been claiming that the acquired land belongs to them they do not have any documents to support their claim, said the BGB official.

However, the indigenous people claim that they own the land through tradition and have been living on the land for long.

Rice for the poor seized from shop

185 kg cheap rated rice recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Law enforcers seized 185 kg of cheap rated rice meant for the poor from a shop at Burimari village in Patgram upazila of the district on Sunday.

Being informed by the villagers, police raided the shop on Sunday afternoon and seized the rice.

Owner of the shop Abu Sayeed Munshi, however, fled the scene, sensing the police raid.

A case was filed with Patgram Police Station against Abu Sayeed and dealer Dulal Hossain, also president of ward no 9 unit of Awami League, under Special Tribunal Act the same night, said Officer-in-Charge (investigation) Mahfuzur Rahman of the police station.

Quoting locals, police said Dulal Hossain sold the rice to Abu Sayeed instead of distributing it among the beneficiaries.

Seeing the anomalies, villagers besieged the shop and informed the police, the OC said.

Police said they raided the shop on the basis of several allegations from ration card holders that they were being deprived of buying rice at Tk 10 per kilogram.

Abu Sayeed told this correspondent over mobile phone that he did not agree to purchase the cheap rated rice meant for the poor but Dulal forced him to keep the rice in his shop.

Despite repeated calls over cellphone, Dulal could not be reached as his phone was found switched off.

Bogra mayor assaulted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Mayor of Bogra municipality AKM Mahbubur Rahman was physically harassed allegedly by a group of lessees at his residence in Jaleshwaritola of the town yesterday.

Mayor Mahbubur, also an adviser to BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, said Abdul Matin, joint-secretary of town unit of Jubo League, Abdul Mannan, a member of same unit of Awami League, and AL activist Kanailal Joyshual Moyna took lease of Fateh Ali Market, Raza Bazar and Chachi Bazar from the municipality till April 13, 2017.

But, before the end of the lease period, they appealed to the High Court (HC) and got an order from the court asking the municipality authority to lease the three markets to them again.

On March 31, the municipality authority published an advertisement in the newspaper over leasing the markets again after the Supreme Court cancelled the HC order.

Out of anger, they entered his house yesterday morning and physically harassed him, added the mayor.

Officer-in-Charge Emdad Hossain of Sadar Police Station said on information, they went to the mayor's house and saw some lessees coming out of the house.

Tale of a spoilt youth

Addiction, extreme brutality led to his killing by mother

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

She committed the otherwise unimaginable act – killing son with her own hands – as there was apparently no other way to save herself from a most humiliating encounter.

Halema Begum, 48, was found sitting beside the body of her son Hazrat Ali, 24, when police rushed to the house around 11:00am on Wednesday, said Nazmul Haque Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tangail Model Police Station.

"She told the law enforcers that she hacked her son to death with an axe in the early hours as he was making advances to her after taking drugs."

"Halema's elder son Abdul Hamid filed a case with the police station in this regard, and she was sent to jail after making a confessional statement to the court under Section 164 the same day," the OC said.

Visiting the house at Binnafair

village under Dainna union in Tangail Sadar upazila on Friday, this correspondent found an eerie silence prevailing there.

"My drug addicted son Hazrat Ali ultimately turned into a beast," said Halema's ailing husband Amzad Hossain.

"My mother has not done anything wrong. But I have become complainant of the case as my brother was killed," said Hamid, an auto-rickshaw driver, adding that earlier they did everything to bring Ali to normal life.

Hamid's wife Asma Begum said, "Hazrat Ali left study when he was a Class VIII student of a local school. He later started taking drugs and would create odd scenes at the house to press for money."

"Five years ago, he was sent to Malaysia and the family had to borrow money for the purpose. But he was sent back to the country after a few months as his visa was found to be fake," she said.

Hamid said they later managed a Class IV job for Ali at Tangail municipality office but he left the job after only three months.

After returning from Malaysia, Ali started taking drugs again and became known to the villagers as a drug addict, said local union parishad member Shajahan Miah, also a neighbour of the family.

He later became so aggressive that he would beat his mother when she refused to give him money, he said.

A mobile court recently sentenced Hazrat Ali to six months' imprisonment for taking and possessing drugs, said his younger sister Amina Begum.

"After release from jail, he promised that he would not take drugs any more if he was given Tk 10,000. And our mother gave him the amount," she said.

"But after a few days, he demanded money again. This time our mother refused and that made



Members of 15 Hindu families of Badurtali area in Kalapara municipality of Patuakhali stage a demonstration in front of Kalapara Press Club yesterday, protesting grabbing of their land.

PHOTO: STAR

The brush makers

FROM PAGE 1

After several years as an employee, Ramjan branched out on his own. He rented modest premises in Lalbagh for his own brush factory. It was 25 years later, in 2007, when he decided to take his factory home.

"I'd been struggling to find adequate space to rent and affordable manpower," Ramjan recalls. "A large part of my income was devoured by factory and house rent in the city. I decided to relocate."

Rokon and Mannan followed Ramjan's lead again. Within five years Herendrapara had three brush factories.

"I can assemble up to five dozen brushes a day," says enthusiastic former housewife Halima Begum. "According to quality and size I earn between Tk 2 and Tk 5 for each."

Thanks to her factory income of up to Tk 3,000

per month, Halima can send her children to school. "Before the factories," she recalls, "all I did beyond housework was to gather dry leaves for cooking."

Neighbour Rozina Akter tells a similar tale. "From brushes I cover our family expenses and have money for personal use as well," she says. The three factories employ around 500 villagers, including 350 women.

Naturally, the improved affluence of brush-making families has a flow-on effect. "The poor women hardly ever reached the market," says Lauhati Bazar stationery shop proprietor Badal Chakroborty. "They had no money to spend. Now they are regular customers, including at my shop."

Shoe, coat, carpet, press and distemper: Herendrapara produces a

wide range of brushes. The timber handles are of kodom wood bought from local timber traders; the tail hair of cows arrives from Dhaka tanneries. Nylon and iron wire complete the raw materials required.

Workers cut and shape cow hair, the nylon and wood at the factories. Women working from home assemble the pieces. Finishing and burning are completed at the factory, with brushes lastly drying in the sunlight. Most are sold to Dhaka's brush factories where true origins are masked by city logos.

Yet our entrepreneurs aren't entirely satisfied. "Some traders have started exporting cow hair to China," says Abdul. "It has increased the local price from about Tk 50 per kg two years ago to Tk 275 now. Our profits are decreasing."

"The police department used to buy around 3 lakh

shoe brushes every year," he continues, "Now they use imported Chinese brushes. Those brushes are essentially the same; only the Chinese ones have little designs on the handle. As I know, contractors supply these foreign brushes to the police for Tk 60 each; ours we sell to middlemen for Tk 22, a price so low that it impacts quality. If end users bought brushes direct, for at least Tk 30 per brush, we could guarantee a better quality product than any Chinese brush."

"Between us we employ several hundred villagers in our factories," says Rokon. "But we have no government patronage or large contracts with local organisations. We could supply the defence forces, border guards and Rab along with the police. They would be supporting local industry. They would be supporting our Herendrapara."

Save land from grabbers

Appeal Kalapara Hindu families

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Fifteen families of Hindu community staged a demonstration yesterday protesting attempt to grab their land in Badurtali area under Kalapara municipality in the district.

Over 50 people of the religious minority group staged the demonstration in front of Kalapara Press Club, seeking support from the local administration to protect their property.

The protesters left the spot after Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kalapara Police Station GM Shah Newaz assured them of taking legal action regarding the matter.

Shah Newaz said they already stopped the work for building the house on the land by the alleged grabbers. He said the situation is now under control.

Locals said a gang led by Abdul Haq Musulli and Delwar Hossain Khan went to build a house on a piece of land owned by a Hindu family in the area.

The representatives of the Hindu fami-

lies Nimai Saha and Monoranjan Shil submitted a complaint to Kalapara Police Station seeking legal steps against the grabbers.

Monoranjan said they are living on 50 decimals of land that was allocated to them by the land office in 2012, where there is a temple.

Municipality Councillor Al-Amin Sardar said around 10 decimals of land, out of 50 decimals, had been grabbed by Abdul Haq and Delwar about a month ago.

He said at least 15 Hindu families have been living there for 30 to 35 years, although they got allocation five years ago.

Al-Amin urged the local administration to take steps to save the land from the grabbers.

Delwar said they did not grab the land of the minorities. The Hindu families' claim is false, he said, adding that they filed the complaint against them (grabbers) only to harass them.

The OC said they have stopped construction on the plot. "The situation is now under control and we will look into the matter," he added.

2 PBCP men arrested in Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two members of the outlawed Janajuddho faction of Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) were arrested early yesterday in Alamdanga upazila of Chuadanga.

The arrestees are Lutfar Rahman, 50, and Nazim Uddin, 47, of Musainagar village in Mirpur upazila of Kushtia.

Chuadanga acting Superintendent of Police Belayet Hossain told journalists at his office that police stopped an auto-rickshaw at about 4:30am while it was coming from Kushtia. The two outlaws were arrested from the vehicle with a pistol and four bullets.