



Shilpi Akhter Jharna cannot check her tears while describing how the Pakistan occupation army killed her father Maqbul Hossain and elder brother Dara Islam along with many others at Sahebpara in Lalmonirhat town on April 5 in 1971.

PHOTO: STAR

## Their pain still intense

Families of 600 martyrs yet to get recognition even 47 years after independence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Their pain is still intense, and hearts still bleed. Like Fatema Begum and Shilpi Akhter Jharna many martyred family members are still carrying the memory of the horrifying atrocities committed on their dear ones in the town during the Liberation War. The families of martyrs are yet to get proper recognition even 47 years after independence, lament their near and dear ones. Around 600 Bangalees, including 84 railway officials and employees, were brutally killed by Pakistani Army and their collaborators at Rickshaw Stand beside Lalmonirhat Railway Station on April 5 in 1971.

Fatema, 58, of Sahebpara area in the town, said "The Pakistani occupation forces with the help of local Biharis killed my college-going brother Hashem Ali, who was preparing to join the freedom fight, in front of my father Omar Ali, a rail-

way employee, during the Liberation War." Later, the occupation forces shot her father dead at the killing ground beside the railway station, said Fatema, adding that their family is yet to get proper recognition for it. Another martyred family member Shilpi, 57, of the area said Pakistani Army with the help of local Biharis picked up her father Maqbul Hossain, a railway employee, on April 5 in 1971 and killed him brutally along with other railway employees at Rickshaw Stand in the town. They did not even get her father's body, she said in tears. "They also killed my elder brother Dara Islam, a college student, in front of my father as he burned the Pakistan flag," Shilpi said, adding that the occupation forces also took away her brother's body. Their dear ones sacrificed their lives during the war but their family is yet to be recognised as

martyred family, laments Shilpi. The Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators picked up railway officers and employees, school and college teachers, businessmen and cultural activists from their residences and offices and took them to the Railway Officers' Club, said Abu Bakkar Siddique, former commander of Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Muktijoddha Sangsad Command. The occupation forces then tortured the victims brutally and shot them dead at the rickshaw stand beside the railway station, he said. Mezbah Uddin Ahmed, former commander of Lalmonirhat District Command of Muktijoddha Sangsad, said they have been contacting the ministry concerned for protecting the killing ground as memorials of the Liberation War and recognising the families of massacre victims as martyred families.

## Skeletons stolen from graveyard

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Three skeletons were stolen from a graveyard in Mirzapur upazila early yesterday. Locals said they found four graves dug and three skeletons stolen from the graveyard at Shavulla village in Fotepur union. Mirzapur Police Station Sub-Inspector Mohammad Nasim said, acting on information from locals, he went to the spot along with a police team and started investigating the matter. A bitter anger is prevailing among the villagers over the incident, said Fotepur Union Parishad Chairman Abdur Rouf. Contacted, AKM Mizanul Haque, officer-in-charge of the police station, said organised gangs of thieves have been active in stealing skeletons from graveyards and selling those to different buyers, including buyers from medical colleges and hospitals, at high prices. "Police are trying to arrest the gangs of the thieves," he added. Five skeletons had been stolen from a graveyard at Baniara village in the adjacent Jampurki union under the same upazila on January 8 this year.

## Two-year-old kid drowns in drain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A two-year-old child met a tragic death after falling into a drain in Pirojpur town yesterday. The deceased was Al Amin, son of Sohel Sikder of Sikarpur area in the town. The boy went to a nearby garden with his grandmother around noon yesterday, family members said. As the grandmother went a bit away, leaving him in the garden, Al Amin fell into a nearby drain of the garden. Finding him missing in the garden, the family members searched for him at different places and lastly they recovered the kid's body from the drain.



Locals look with dismay at the graveyard at Shavulla village in Mirzapur upazila of Tangail, where thieves stole skeletons of three buried bodies on Monday night.

PHOTO: STAR



Munshiganj district command of Muktijoddha Sangsad brings out a procession in the town yesterday marking 'Munshiganj free day'. On the day in 1971, the valiant freedom fighters freed the district from the Pakistan army, a few days before the nation's final victory against the occupation forces on December 16.

PHOTO: STAR

## Train derails, link halted for 2hrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rail communication between Rajshahi and the capital remained suspended for nearly two hours after the locomotive and a compartment of a train derailed in Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat yesterday. The communication resumed after the derailed locomotive and compartment were cleared off the railway track around 11:30am. Railway officials in Joypurhat said the engine and a compartment of Rajshahi-bound Uttara Express train from Nilphamari was derailed soon after it entered Panchbibi Rail Station around 9:30am. Later, the salvage train from Dinajpur's Parbatipur upazila went to the spot and cleared the derailed engine and compartment from the track after two hours of frantic effort, said Nasir Uddin, assistant transport officer of western railway zone at Pakshi. A four-member probe body was formed to investigate the incident, he said.

## TEMPLE VANDALISM CASE UP chairman denied bail, sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A Pirojpur court yesterday sent a union parishad (UP) chairman to jail in connection with a case for vandalising a Hindu temple in Sadar upazila on October 7. The accused, Sikdermallik UP Chairman Advocate Shahidul Islam, is also law secretary of the district unit Awami League (AL). District and Sessions Judge Abdul Mannan passed the order after Shahidul appeared before the court seeking bail in the case yesterday noon and sent him to jail. Earlier, a Supreme Court bench granted Shahidul ad-interim bail for eight weeks and ordered him to appear before Pirojpur court within the time limit. Locals said there had been a dispute between local Hindus and Shahidul over the ownership of a temple land at Panchpara Bazar for nearly 11 years. On October 7, some 45 to 50 men loyal to Shahidul vandalised the Kali Temple around 2:30am in a bid to grab its land. The criminals fled the scene after locals sensed their presence and started protesting the vandalism. Subhas Mistry, president of the temple managing committee, filed a case with Pirojpur Sadar Police Station against 45 people, in which 10 people were named with Shahidul being the prime accused. After the incident, police detained six of the accused, who are now out of jail on bail, while eight more accused in the case took ad-interim bail from the High Court.

## Extortion bid through SIM cloning

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A gang of criminals yesterday tried to extort money from the headmasters of different secondary educational institutions by cloning the mobile SIM cards of Louhajang upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and the upazila secondary education officer. Louhajang UNO Mohammad Kabirul Islam said the headmasters of different secondary educational institutions informed him that people were trying to extort money from them, posing as callers from the UNO office. The criminals asked the headmasters to send money through a bKash number. "I filed a general dairy with Louhajang Police Station in this regard," Kabirul said. Md Jahangir, Louhajang upazila secondary education officer, said his mobile SIM card was also cloned by the fraudsters but the teachers did not send any money to the bKash number mentioned by the cheats. The attempts by the fraudsters were foiled as the headmasters concerned verified the matter.

## 32-KILOMETRE HIGHWAY IN GAIBANDHA Road accidents kill 112 in five years

KM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

As many as 112 people were killed and 703 others injured in over three hundred road crashes along 32 kilometre highway across the district in the last five years. Officials of Roads and Highways Department (RHD), Gobindaganj upazila fire fighting unit and highway police in the district recently revealed the statistic. According to the statistical report, the number of road mishap in the district is increasing gradually every year. In 2014, 11 persons were killed and eight others injured in 25 mishaps, in 2015, 19 were killed and 17 others injured in 30 accidents, in 2016, 18 were killed and 162 injured in 74 mishaps, in 2017, 25 were killed and 178 injured in 74 crashes and in 2018 till October 20, 39 were killed and 338 injured in 117 mishaps. Ten probable reasons have been identified for the repeated road mishaps along the 32km highway. According to police investigation, ten reasons were detected for road accidents like a single driver for long-route bus from origin to destination, drivers often feel fatigue, unskilled and reckless driving, ignoring traffic rules, racing for overtaking, absence of road divider in accident prone spots, bus helpers often driving in lieu of drivers and vehicles plying without fitness certificate. Abdul Hamid, manager of Gobindaganj upazila fire station, pointed out that while on duty he saw that accidents took place when two speedy vehicles crossed each other from opposite directions, especially at turnings. He also suggested providing adequate training to bus drivers and helpers and making use of seat belts mandatory for drivers and passengers. Moreover, all the turning points need to be straightened, because the accident prone turning points are situated at 90 degree angle, he added.

A team of Accident Research Institute of Buet conducted survey on accident prone areas of Gaibandha. The team identified seven most vulnerable points for road accident along 32 kilometre way out of 13 risky turning points. Meanwhile, Gaibandha RHD also marked 13 accident prone turning points along the highway. They are Fasitola, Bakchar, Boalia, Kalitola, Chapriganj, Katakali, Komarpur and Noondaha in

Gobindaganj upazila, Nuniyagari, Dakghar, Giridharipur and Bracmore in Palashbari upazila and Dhaperhat in Sadullapur upazila. Gaibandha RHD Executive Engineer Asaduzzaman said they have no programme to straighten the turning point. Instead they have taken a programme for widening the turning points and placing dividers. On the other hand, Gaibandha police undertook

a plan for halting northern region bound night coaches for refreshment of the drivers to avert drowsiness in the long drive. They arranged washing place and tea break for the drivers at Gobindaganj Highway Police Station premises. Police set up specially made alert signboard at 13 vulnerable turning points to make aware drivers and are getting fruitful result, said Akhtaruzzaman, officer-in-charge of the police station.



Gaibandha district police set up a signboard, warning people about accident-prone area at Noondaha turning on Bogura-Rangpur highway in Gobindaganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR