



Alarmed by the last couple of days' rain and hailstorm that has already caused damage to Boro paddy in different areas, farmers reap the crop, around two weeks before the stipulated period, at a field of Boromchal area of Hakaluki Haor in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila. The photo taken yesterday portrays a typical picture in the vast haor area where farmers faced huge losses of crops due to recurrent floods last year.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

In remembrance of Suchitra Sen

Programmes held in her hometown on 88th birth anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Suchitra Sen, legendary actress in Bangla cinema, was remembered at her ancestral home in Pabna town, marking her 88th birth anniversary yesterday.

The district administration in cooperation with Suchitra Sen Smrity Sangrakkhan Parishad organised different programmes at her Gopalpur Hem Sagor Lane ancestral home.

In the morning, district administration organised a cake festival and placed bouquets of flowers at her statue at the venue.

Among others, Pabna Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Jasim Uddin, Superintendent of Police Mohammad Rafikul Islam, Suchitra Sen Smrity Sangrakkhan Parishad organiser Dr Ram Dulal Voumik and journalist Akhteruzzaman, attended the programme.

Suchitra Sen Smrity Sangrakkhan Parishad brought out a colourful rally in the town and later organised a film screening followed by a discussion.

Born on April 6, 1931, at Bangabari in Sirajganj, Suchitra Sen spent her early life in Gopalpur Hem Sagor Lane in Pabna town and soon after the partition, in 1947, her family migrated to Kolkata.

The screen legend passed away on January 17 in 2014 in Kolkata.

Following a High Court order, Suchitra's historic house at Hem Sagor Lane was freed from illegal occupiers on July 16, 2016 and later, Pabna district administration established a museum there.

"People of Pabna want a film archive at her ancestral home," Suchitra Sen Smrity Sangrakkhan Parishad General Secretary Noresh Modhu said.

RANGPUR SUGAR MILLS

4,500 tonne unsold sugar puts factory on the back foot

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Payment owed to sugarcane suppliers by Rangpur Sugar Mills in Gaibandha amounted to Tk 16.5 crore as it still has an unsold stock of sugar worth over Tk 22.5 crore.

Due to the cash crunch resulted from unsold goods, the mill authorities have not been able to pay salaries, totalling several crores of taka, to its employees since November last year.

Out of a total of 4,500 tonne of the unsold stock, 2,243 tonne sugar was produced this production season ending on February 15, according to sources at the factory.

Last season alone, 56,263 tonne sugarcane was procured from suppliers at a cost of Tk 18.15 crore. The mill authorities so far paid off only Tk 75 crore to the suppliers, the sources added.

Ferdous Alam, a sugarcane farmer and also a

supplier from Poontair village in Gobindaganj upazila, said he supplied sugarcane to the mill after growing it on three bighas of his land. But due to the non-payment of due bills by the mill authorities, farmers are losing interest in growing the crop for next season.

Another supplier named Moshir Rahman, from Chandpur Singa village in the same upazila, said he had been making frequent visits to the mill to collect his payment, but he had to come home disappointed all those times.

The sugar produced at the local mills are going unsold as the country's markets are flooded with imported sugar that has a cleaner appearance and sold at a cheaper price. The locally produced sugar, on the other hand, appears less clean with its brownish colour, while its price is higher, said traders and consumers.

Presently, the imported sugar sells at Tk 42 to 43 a kilogram, as opposed to Tk 50 a kg for the local sugar.

Rafiqul Islam, a resident of Kholahati village in Sadar upazila, said, "We get white sugar at a low price. So, we don't bother buying the somewhat brownish local sugar at a higher price."

While speaking with this correspondent, Anwar Hossain Akanda, managing director of Rangpur Sugar Mills, said the situation arose from the price difference between local and imported sugar, resulting in the piling up of unsold stock at the mill.

However, within the coming weeks, they might be able to pay off a major portion of the outstanding amount the mill owes to suppliers as the government has already allocated Tk 500 crore to subsidise unpaid dues of 15 sugar mills in the country, he hoped.

CRIMES IN TWO BAGERHAT UZS

Villagers guard houses at night

STAR REPORT

Panic runs rife in at least 13 villages in Sharankhola and Morrelganj upazilas of Bagerhat and the villagers there are spending sleepless nights to guard properties and lives following a recent spate of crimes including robbery, abduction and theft.

In a span of 11 days in March alone, four different organised crimes took place in four villages in the upazilas, causing a wave of panic in surrounding areas.

The villagers said they were living in fear as most of the criminals still remain at large, while police and local administration are failing to provide necessary protection for them.

Sharankhola's Dhansagar resident Samir Kumar Nandi, a school teacher, said almost all his valuables were stolen last year and just last month, there was an armed robbery at one of his neighbours' houses.

Witnessing no improvement in the situation or action from law enforcers, Samir set up a bench at the entrance of his own house to guard his property during night time.

"I used to go to sleep around 9:00pm. But now, I can't sleep till at least 3:00am... It isn't difficult to say that I'm in a state of panic now," Samir also said.

On March 2, a gang looted a house in the upazila's Dhansagar union. Only six days apart, valuables from eight houses in Nalbunga of the same upazila were stolen on just one night.

Then on March 11, criminals abducted a two-and-a-half months old infant for ransom while the parents were sleeping next to the child in their house in Bisharighata of Morrelganj.

Two days later, on March 13, a group of robbers looted two houses at Kuthibari of Morrelganj after rendering dwellers of the houses senseless by using some form of anaesthetic spray.

The Daily Star during visits to the

area found that residents of Baniakhali, Badhal, Rajapur and Bandakata in Sharankhola; and Gulishakhali, Kathaltola, Bhajjora, Kalikabari and Amtoli in Morrelganj also started to guard their own houses at night following the rise in theft, robbery and other crimes in neighbouring areas.

Mohammad Shoaib, a resident of Kalikabari where a series of theft incidents took place last year, said residents in all villages in both Sharankhola and Morrelganj and beyond are now panic-stricken.

Asaduzzaman Swapan, panel chairman of Dhansagar union in Sharankhola, told this correspondent that thieves also attempted to steal from his house last month.

Over the past 30 days, there had been only six or seven arrests, which is not enough, considering the number of offenses that are taking place in the upazila, he said, adding, "If they [criminals] are not arrested, they can break into anyone's house any time."

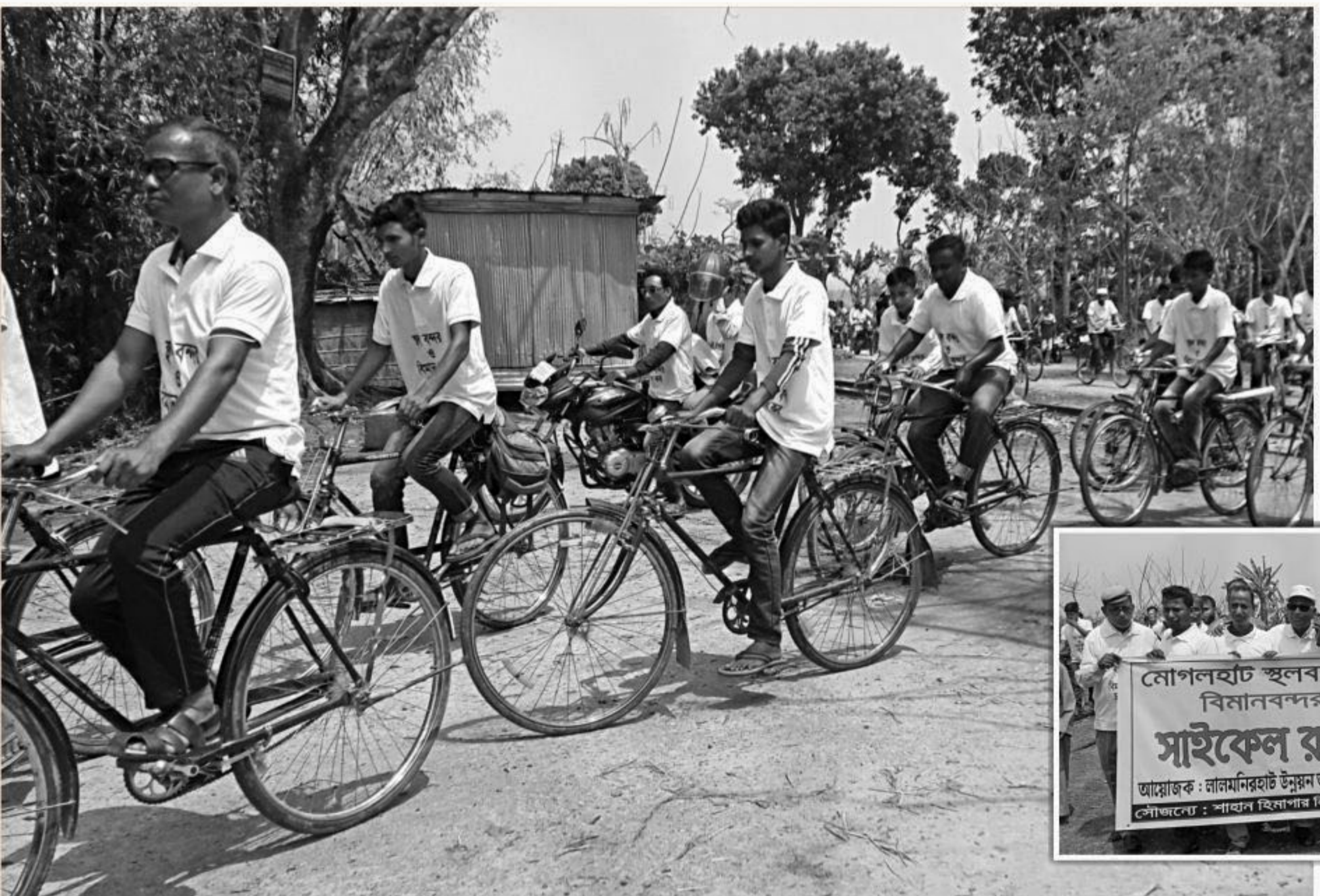
Contacted, Sharankhola Police Station OC Dilip Kumar Sarkar said they beefed up patrolling in the area and already arrested some of the criminals involved in robberies.

KM Azizul Islam, OC of Morrelganj Police Station, said, "We are conducting raids to arrest the criminals, particularly the thieves."

However, Riazul Islam, an additional superintendent of police in Bagerhat, said since Bagerhat is a large district with many remote villages, their logistics limitations do not allow them to increase patrolling immediately.

Dhansagar Union Parishad Chairman Mainul Hossain Tipu claimed that last month he deployed nine chowkidars (security guards) to patrol areas in his union.

Our Bagerhat correspondent Partha Chakraborty and staff correspondent Abdullah Al Nayeem contributed to the story.



Lalmonirhat Unnayan Andolon Parishad organises a 10-km-long bicycle procession from 'zero line' of bordering Mogholhat village to Lalmonirhat town yesterday demanding steps to establish a land port at Mogholhat and reopen commercial flights to and from Lalmonirhat Airport that has remained closed for decades.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY



Criminals shoot VDP man dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Unknown assailants shot a member of the Village Defence Party (VDP) dead in Ashuganj a yesterday.

Bhanulal Chandra, 35, son of Haricharan Das of Talshahar village and a member of VDP at Talshahar Union Parishad, was killed on Talshahar-Bahadurpur regional road around 9:30am.

Masud Alam, officer-in-charge of Ashuganj police, said, "The assailants shot Bhanulal, who was inside the moving jeep of Talshahar UP Chairman Abu Shama, and left him dead on the spot."

Amir Hossain, the chairman's son, said Bhanulal was going to Ashuganj to buy fuel. All on a sudden, some unknown youth opened fire on the jeep. Bhanulal was shot in his head and died on the spot.

Aims high but roots

FROM PAGE 2

"I hope we all realise and act according to our responsibilities; from helping people ... to following traffic protocols, disposing of trash in the bins and raising awareness about safety protocols to protect the environment ...," said Sinthia, who took the exams from Changes.

Reza Mursalin Sabid, who got 11A* in one sitting from Mastermind English Medium School, said he wants to go abroad to study genetic engineering and return to serve the country.

"I want to do something for Bangladesh," he said. "When it comes to success, there is no elevator. You have to take the stairs," said Reza.

"You don't need to be talented to get A*s, you need strategic hard work and for a person with such traits, the sky is the limit," he said.

The students expressed gratitude towards their parents and teachers for their contribution in their success. "My success is not mine alone. My parents and teachers played a big role," Reza said.

A total of nine students, including the four mentioned, got special recognition for achieving the highest A's in O- and A-levels at the ceremony.

one sitting in the O-levels; Shania Monis Aisharja of the same school got 9A* and 2A's in one sitting; Elvis Mostafa of Maple Leaf International School got 11A* in two sittings; and Asmita Saha Roy of Salvation International School achieved 6A*s and 5A's in two sittings.

Teachers and guardians who attended the programme said The Daily Star's annual awards ceremony is a huge inspiration and motivation for the students.

Dhaka's Cordova International School and College Principal Sabbir Uddin Ahmed and The Sylhet Khajanchibari International School and College Principal Hossain Ahmed said the award was good recognition of a student's success.

"Students feel highly motivated and encouraged to get better results," said Sabbir.

Shahina Haroon Shafiq, A-level supervisor of Scholastica Uttara Branch, said the speeches delivered at the ceremony were very thought-provoking and will have an impact in the students' minds.

Ahmad Moshed Anam, father of awardee Mahna Mehnaz who got 6A*s and 1A, said the recognition by The Daily Star would help students be more confident in facing challenges ahead.

This year, a total of 2,257 students -- 1,813 from O-levels and 444 from A-levels -- were recognised at the award giving ceremony.

BCL men 'bore holes'

FROM PAGE 18

from him. A general diary (GD) was lodged with Panchlailsh Police Station in this connection.

However, police said the incident took place over previous enmity.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Amzad said, "I was returning home on a CNG-run auto-rickshaw from a wedding ceremony at a relative's house when a group of 20 to 30 men, led by Jalal, Didar, Nishan and others, stopped my vehicle.

"They dragged me out of the CNG and started beating me. At one point, they tied me to an electric pole and asked to call my father over phone for money," Amzad said while on the hospital bed.

He added that, after the phone call, his father and elder brother rushed to the spot to save him but they too were attacked.

"They first beat me with an iron rod and at one point they drilled holes into my legs... They also beat my father and brother with iron rods, leaving them injured," Amzad said.

Locals rushed the trio to CMCH.

Senior Consultant of the casualty ward in CMCH, Rivu Raj Chakraborty, said there were two holes on the victim's

legs but they were not sure whether they were done by drills as no bones were hurt.

Police and the victim's family members said that attackers Jalal, Didar, Nishan work under the guidance of a local Jubo League (JL) leader Esrabul Haque.

Contacted, Esrabul said, "Jalal and other men are doing local Chattra League politics in Chandgaon. But I am not sure whether there were any incidents of extortion."

"I heard the incident took place over due to a dispute over a cricket match but after hearing the details, I had made calls to the police station to help the injured myself," the JL leader claimed.

"If they [BCL men] are involved in the attack, police should arrest them as the party does not hold the responsibility of such misdeeds," Esrabul added.

Inspector (investigation) of Chandgaon Police Station Abdur Rahim said the victim's father filed a case accusing eight people including Jalal, Didar and others.

Police were conducting drives to arrest them, he added.

No space

FROM PAGE 18

is formed, a system will be in place to monitor their implementation," she said.

Sonia Gandhi will contest the Lok Sabha elections from Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly seat which she has been representing since 1999.

Meanwhile, addressing a rally in Odisha, Indian PM Narendra Modi said Congress and BJD, who rule the state, are using poverty as vote bank.

Russian

FROM PAGE 3

from Ishwardi.

He, along with three of his colleagues, drank the liquor together after lunch on Friday. The four were taken to Ishwardi Health Complex when they fell sick at 8:00pm on Saturday with abdomen pain.

Doctors at the health complex referred them to RMCH as their condition deteriorated, said Bahauddin Faruki, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station.

Medical Officer Nafiz Rahman at RMCH said Dmitry was brought dead at the hospital.

Two others were admitted to the hospital while one other Russian engineer was released, doctors said.