



One of the dredgers set for lifting sand from a spot very close to the bridge on the Manu river in Sharifpur union of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

# Sand lifting poses threat to bridge on Manu river

Moulvibazar, Tripura road link also under threat due to the callous act

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Mindless sand lifting poses threat to Manu Bridge on Moulvibazar-Kailashahar road linking Bangladesh and Tripura via Chatlapur land port in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila.

Three local influential men, who took lease for sand lifting from a portion of the Manu river area six months ago, are extracting sand from a depth of around 50 feet of the waterbody near the bridge in Sharifpur union of Kulaura, said stakeholders.

During a visit to the spot a couple of days ago, this correspondent found three dredgers engaged in extracting sand near the bridge.

"Flood control embankment in Manu bridge area got damaged more than once due to unplanned sand lifting from the riverbed. Later authorities repaired it with sandbags," said Makhlisur Rahman of Namaja area in Kulaura.

Many houses and other set-ups in the area are on the verge of extinction due to the sand lifting, said locals, adding that they observed different programmes including human chains on several occasions over the issue.

Seeking anonymity, several locals said the lease-holders conduct the illegal act at night amid lax monitoring by the authorities.

"I am going to lose three acres of land due to erosion caused by illegal sand lifting," said Firoz Khan, a local.

Md Junab Ali, chairman of Sharifpur union parishad (UP), said they submitted a complaint to the deputy commissioner of Moulvibazar demanding immediate steps to stop illegal sand lifting from the bridge area.

"If the callous act is not prevented, Manu Bridge will face threat, especially during the monsoon, when the water level sees an alarming rise.

"Once the bridge becomes unusable, import and export from and to India through Chatlapur land port will stop, causing trouble for a large number of

people on both sides," he said.

Abdul Malik, former president of Shamsheernagar Banik Samity, said he along with former local UP member Nashibur Rahman Nashim and Noor Ahmed Chowdhury Bulbul took the lease for sand lifting from the river area for 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Asked whether the deal allows them to lift sand from near the bridge, he declined to make any comment.

According to the Balu Mohal O Mati Babosthapon Aina, 2010 (Sand Fields and Soil Management Act, 2010), sand lifting is not allowed within 500 metres of any bridge area, said Abdul Karim Kim, executive member of Bangladesh

Paribesh Andolon.

But the syndicate of influential traders having political connections continued lifting sand near the bridge with powerful dredgers, he said.

Asked about the matter, Kulaura Upazila Assistant Commissioner (Land) Nazratun Naim said, "I seized different equipment from the spot several times and ordered the sand lifters to remove the dredgers from the bridge area. Administrative action will be taken if sand lifting is done there again."

Upazila Nirbahi Officer ATM Farhad Chowdhury said he will look into the matter and take action against the perpetrators.

## Housewife stabbed for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A housewife, who was stabbed and tortured on Friday allegedly by her dowry greedy husband, is now undergoing treatment at Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital with severe stab injuries all over her body including face.

The victim, Farzana Akther Happy, 28, daughter of Yakub Ali of Debpur village in Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila, was first admitted to Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex on Friday night, from where she was later referred to Brahmanbaria.

Meanwhile, victim's brother filed a case with Madhabpur Police Station accusing his sister's husband Shafiqul Islam Babu, 33, on Saturday night, Officer in Charge of the police station Iqbal Hossain said.

Victim's father Yakub said his daughter was married to Babu, son of late Imtiaz Ali of Baisnabpur village in the upazila, in 2014.

Since the marriage, Babu had been torturing his daughter both physically and mentally for dowry, he alleged.

According to the case statement, Babu asked Happy to bring Tk 2 lakh from her father on Friday.

As she refused to do so, Babu first beat her mercilessly with stick and then stabbed her indiscriminately with a kitchen knife around 8:00pm and fled the scene.

Hearing cry for help, villagers rescued injured Happy and admitted her to Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex.

## Fish poisoned dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Miscereants poisoned to death fish worth around Tk one lakh in a pond at Durakuti Bishbari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila early Saturday.

Safar Ali, a farmer of the village, is the owner of the pond.

Safar said he found the dead fish floating on the water early in the morning.

Safar filed a complaint with Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station in this regard yesterday morning, said Mahfuz Alam, officer-in-charge of the police station.



PHOTO: STAR

Poor visibility caused by dense fog has disrupted traffic movement in Dinajpur town. Vehicles move slowly with headlights on during daytime. The picture was taken from in front of Dinajpur Zila School around 8:30am yesterday.

## SNATCHING OF CAMERA

# Journos demand action against food officer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Journalists at a human chain in Lalmonirhat town on Thursday demanded action against the food officer who took away video camera from a TV journalist on December 23.

The human chain was formed at Mission Intersection on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway in the town.

However, three days after the incident, Shahinur Rahman, in-charge of local storage depot (LSD) at Purnabazar Kalibari in Lalmonirhat town, returned the camera to the journalist.

On 23rd of last month in 2019, Shahinur forcibly took away the camera from Jahedul Islam Somapto, district correspondent of Maasranga Television. Jahedul went to the warehouse to cover a news report on paddy procurement from rice mill owners.

Soon after the incident, the additional

district commissioner (ADC), members of police and local journalists went to the spot and the ADC, after primary investigation, found the food officer guilty of snatching the camera.

Journalist Jahedul, a resident of Thana Para area in the town, said "I got my video camera back three days after the incident, but I didn't get justice."

"I lodged a complaint with Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station, but I didn't pursue it [the case] as the deputy commissioner had assured me of departmental action against the food officer within 15 days of the incident," he added.

At the human chain on Thursday, Majed Masud, general secretary of Professional Journalists' Platform in Lalmonirhat, said journalists in the district will call a tougher program unless action is taken against Shahinur by January 20.

RAPE OF SPEECH IMPAIRED GIRL

## Key accused arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police yesterday arrested one of the accused in connection with a case for raping a speech impaired girl in Pabna's Atghoria upazila on Saturday.

Police produced the arrestee, Abdul Karim, 50, son of Monjil Hossain of Gokulnagar village, before a court yesterday afternoon that sent him to jail.

Earlier on Saturday night, mother of the 18-year-old victim filed a case with Atghoria Police Station accusing two people.

Quoting victim's family members, police said Karim and his associate Belal Hossain forcibly raped the girl at her house on Saturday when none of her family members were present.

# Hobby turns to profit

Jashore woman sets example by cultivating mushroom commercially

MOHSIN MILON, Benapole

It is not so easy to move something from a hobby to a business. But Farzana Yeasmin of Jashore town has turned it into profit with a measure of her entrepreneurial spirit.

Her raise and success story are now a great source of inspiration for many housewives and unemployed youths in the area.

Initially Farzana began mushroom cultivation with a few spawns (mushroom seed) as a hobby. Now, with around 1,300 packs of different varieties of mushrooms at her Bristi Mushroom Centre, she is now selling those commercially.

Farzana's rooftop farming of mushroom became very popular in the locality then, which

inspired her a lot.

In 2016, Farzana received training on mushroom cultivation from Magura Dream Mushroom. With Tk 2.50 lakh, she then commercially started mushroom cultivation on the rooftop of her rented house in the town's Murali area under a project. She collected spawns from Dhaka Mushroom Development Centre.

"When I started mushroom cultivation, I never really looked at it as a business but as pursuing a hobby. My project name is Bristi Mushroom Centre," said Farzana.

Each packet of mushroom is now being sold at Tk 250 while the production cost is Tk 25 for per pack, she said, adding that as the production cost is very nominal, it is a profitable business.

Buyers directly come to buy mushroom at her house, she added.

Farzana said her business is quite good and she is planning to export the mushrooms.

Fifteen male and female employees are now working at her centre, she said.

Emdad Hossain Sheikh, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Jashore, said encouraged by the success of trained grower Farzana, many housewives and unemployed youths are expressing their interest to receive training on mushroom cultivation.

They have already given training on mushroom farming to some youths, said the DAE official.



Farzana Yeasmin takes care of mushrooms at her house in Jashore town.

PHOTO: COLLECTED