

# Broken bridge lies unrepaired for 3yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Thousands of villagers are suffering a lot as a 150-foot-long bridge on Sutabaria canal in Patuakhali's Dashmina upazila has remained unused since a portion of the bridge collapsed over three years ago.

Especially school goers and critical patients are the worst sufferers as they have to cross the canal on a dinghy amid risk of accident.

Locals said in 2016, a 25-foot-long portion of the bridge in Jamir Mridha Bazar area collapsed as a sand-laden cargo hit it. A girl was killed and five others were injured in the accident.

Since then the bridge has remained unused, causing immense sufferings to thousands of commuters, they said.

A source at Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Dashmina upazila said in 2014-15 fiscal year, the bridge was built at a cost of Tk 10 lakh to ease communication of nearby 11 villages with the upazila headquarters.

The villages include Mordana, Goromali, Jafrabad, Kharija, Betagi, Rambollov, Chingoria, Dabari, Chandrabaj and Tafalbaria in the upazila.

Md Hiron Ahmed, acting headmaster of Kharija Betagi High School, said a Patuakhali-bound sand-laden cargo from Galachipa upazila hit one of the pillars of the bridge while crossing the canal on December 14 in 2016. At the time, a portion

of the bridge collapsed.

Since then students and local people have to cross the canal on dinghy amid risk of accident, Hiron said, adding that due to this, students' attendance in different schools of the area has thin.

There are 320 students at Kharija Betagi High School and 213 at Kharija Betagi Government Primary School in the bazar area.

Faria Sultana, health care service provider of a community clinic in the area, said a good number of patients visited the clinic before the bridge collapsed but now the number of patients has decreased.

Jahanagir Melkar, a trader of the bazar, said they have to face various problems to bring their goods to the markets of the upazila headquarters since the bridge became unfit to use about three years ago.

Despite repeated pleas, the authorities concerned are yet to take any steps to repair the bridge, said Md Mohibul Alam, chairman of Betagi Sankipuyr Union Parishad.

Md Nasir Uddin Pahloan, vice chairman of Dashmina upazila parishad, said they are trying their best to repair the broken bridge.

Upazila LGED Engineer Md Jahangir Alam said they have already written to the higher authorities for funds to repair the bridge but to no respond yet.



School kids cross the canal on a dinghy amid risk of accident in Patuakhali's Dashmina upazila as a broken bridge over the water body has been lying unrepaired for over three years.

PHOTO:STAR

# Carpeting of newly renovated road damaged

Locals allege low quality work of the LGED road in Lalmonirhat

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The carpeting of newly renovated five-kilometre Mohishkhocha-Burirhat road in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila is getting damaged as the work under Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) was done allegedly without doing sufficient strengthening work.

Meanwhile, the contractor has already received 95 percent of the bill although the road is yet to be handed over to the authorities concerned, said official sources of the LGED in Lalmonirhat.

Locals said the carpeting of the road has already got detached at places as the contractor did the work without maintaining the standard.

Stipulated strengthening with Water Bound Macadam (WBM) was not done while renovating the road, said a few stakeholders.

As per schedule, the road was to be renovated with three-inch thickness of WBM and 40-milimetre thickness of carpeting, LGED officials said.

Contractor Abdul Hakim got the Tk 2.65 crore work order from LGED and the construction work started in January last year.

"I gave the work to sub-contractor Daud Ali and he has done renovation of the road with the proper monitoring of the LGED engineer. If there is any fault in the work, Daud is responsible," Hakim said.

Asked about the matter, Daud Ali declined to talk with journalists about the renovation work of Mohishkhocha-Burirhat road.

He suggested that the LGED engineer concerned can say details about the matter.

Aditmari upazila LGED engineer Aminur Rahman remained silent when asked why the road was competed without stipulated WBM work.

Contacted, Lalmonirhat LGED Executive



PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Carpeting of the newly renovated Burirhat-Mahishkhocha road in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila is getting damaged even before officially handing it over to the authorities concerned of Local Government Engineering Department.

Engineer Ashraf Ali Khan said the contractor is yet to hand over the road to the authorities as he didn't complete 400-metre of the 500-metre RCC construction of the road.

"He has not been paid the final bill. Besides, there is security money. I will examine the road and if it is found that the renovation work was completed without doing WBM, legal action will be taken."

## 3 to die for killing schoolboy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Gaibandha District and Sessions Judge's Court yesterday awarded death sentence to three persons and five years' jail term to eight others in the case for murdering the teenage son of Gobindaganj municipality mayor.

The judge, Dilip Kumar Bhaumik pronounced the verdict.

The three people to walk gallows are Shahrier Sarker Hridoy, Rakibul Hasan Sajib and Mahmudul Hasan Jakir while the jail term awardees are Jainul Abedin, a municipality councillor, Masud Prodhan Sujon, Al-Amin Islam, Rabeya Begum, Al-Amin, Shimul Mia, Runa Begum and Jahangir Alam.

According to the prosecution, Ashiqur Rahman Samya, son of Gobindaganj municipality Mayor Ataur Rahman Sarker, went missing from his residence at Ghoshpara in Gobindaganj on September 24 in 2015.

Next day police recovered his body from a septic tank of Gobindaganj community centre and the victim's father filed a murder case with Gobindagnaj Police Station.

Samya, 14, was a student of Class IX in Gobindaganj Model High school.

# Teesta char farmers see hope in spices

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Cultivation of turmeric, ginger and other spices, alongside other primary crops, are gaining popularity in the Teesta river chars of Sundarganj upazila.

Farmers said they have been growing spices alongside conventional crops as market prices of spices are higher than that of the conventional ones.

Among the spices, cultivation of turmeric and ginger has been more profitable as their prices continued to rise considerably since onion prices hit a record high across the country last year, they also said.

In order to take advantage of the higher prices, farmers in Ramjibon, Bamondanga, Sarbanando and Tarapur unions are growing turmeric and ginger on more than twice as much land that they used in the previous years.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension, 35 to 40 maunds of turmeric and 25 to 30 maunds of ginger can be harvested from one bigha of land.

While visiting Bhabanipur village in Ramjibon

union, farmer Ashraf Ali said he had been growing turmeric on two bighas of land for the last five years and made Tk 1.40 lakh each year from the sale of unripe turmeric. But this year, encouraged by the higher prices, he cultivated turmeric on three bighas of land.

"This season, price of unripe turmeric reached Tk 80 per kilogram at retail markets. So, I'm hoping to make nearly Tk 2.50 lakh from its sale," he added.

Rafiqul Mia, a vegetable vendor at Ramjibon market, said spices like turmeric and ginger used to be cultivated on unused land around dwellings of framers. But now that prices of those have increased significantly at the markets, the spices are being grown on croplands too.

Sundarganj Upazila Agriculture Officer Syed Reza-e-Mahmud said in comparison with years before, cultivation of turmeric and ginger doubled in the upazila this year.

Turmeric has been cultivated on 60 hectares of land and ginger on 50 hectares this season, he also said.



A turmeric field in a char of Ramjibon union in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

## WATER AMBULANCE TO THE RESCUE



Photo of the "Payra Boat Ambulance" that was inaugurated on Tuesday in Patuakhaili's remote upazila Rangabali that is surrounded by rivers on three sides and the Bay of Bengal to its south. The residents of Rangabali need to travel to neighbouring upazilas to avail health services as the upazila is yet to have any medical facilities. Equipped with oxygen supply and other life-saving equipment, the water ambulance will be on standby 24/7 to take any patient from five unions of Rangabali to a nearby hospital within 30 minutes. Non-governmental organisation Obhijatrik Foundation procured the boat with financing from IDLC Finance Limited.

PHOTO: SOHRABHOSSAIN

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