



The span of the damaged bridge, on Panaullah canal in Boktarpur area of Natore's Singra upazila, lies precariously on top of its broken pier. Inset, a man pulls a rickshaw-van on the bamboo platform that the locals made to be able to use the bridge.

PHOTO: BULBULAHMED



The long wait for safety

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

About a couple of years back, a JSC examinee died while crossing the bridge that sustained substantial damage during floods in 2018. It started to tilt about five years ago. And ever since, number of people injured, while using the bridge, continue to rise.

However, despite such incidents, the authorities remain indifferent to safety of citizens, who continue to use the bridge -- in Boktarpur area of Singra upazila -- as they do not have any other alternative.

The bridge, over Panaullah canal in Lalor union of Singra, is a vital means of communications for inhabitants of at least 12 villages in Singra, Naldanga and Sadar upazilas of Natore and Atrai upazila of Naogaon.

Instead of providing a safer solution, the local administration did their part by making a makeshift bamboo bridge beside the damaged concrete bridge.

After the makeshift bridge also collapsed about a year ago, locals made a bamboo

platform to be able to use the damaged concrete bridge.

Now thousands, including students of six educational institutions, use the severely damaged bridge every day, risking their lives, said locals.

Nearly two months ago, 12 pedestrians and passengers of a rickshaw-van were injured after the vehicle overturned on the bridge, they added.

During a recent visit to the area, between 9:00am and 12 noon, this correspondent counted at least three hundred light vehicles -- rickshaw-vans, auto-rickshaws and motorbikes -- that crossed the damaged bridge using the bamboo platform.

Nazrul Islam, chairman of Lalor Union Parishad, said students of a high school, four primary schools and a madrasa, on both sides of the canal, take extreme risks every day to cross the broken bridge.

Hundreds of residents from 12 villages in three upazilas of Natore and one in Naogaon use the bridge every day to reach Natore, Naogaon

and Bogura. Moreover, farmers in Chalan Beel area face immense sufferings as they use this bridge to transport their agricultural goods, he also said.

Md Aktar uz Zaman, a lecturer at Patul Hapania Degree College, said thousands of people have been suffering for years due to the risky bridge, but the local administration did not take any step in this regard.

"Crossing the bridge with our children is an everyday struggle," said expecting mother Salma Begum.

Teligram village resident Nurjahan Begum said, "We have no other option but to risk our lives on the bridge."

Engineer Hasan Ali of Local Government Engineering Department in Singra said they already prepared a Tk 2.5-crore project proposal for a new bridge, but it might take a year to get the project approved.

Considering the urgency, local public representatives have asked disaster management and relief ministry to build a bridge there immediately, he added.

Complaint boxes placed for students' safety

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

At first sight, anyone can be curious to see a box named 'UNO BOX'. It is basically a complaint box hung on walls in the corridors of different educational institutions in Ashuganj upazila.

Ashuganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Nazimul Haider has recently taken an initiative to install such box at different institutions so that anyone, especially students, teachers and guardians, can put complaint against any misdeed in it.

From last Monday to yesterday three boxes have been put up on the walls of three high schools in Ashuganj. The institutions include Rowshan Ara Jalil Girls High School and Haji Abdul Jalil High School.

A total of 18 educational institutions in the upazila, by turns, will get the box, made of timber and transparent glass, within this current month, said Nazimul.

Every Wednesday, a representative of UNO will open the box, he said, adding that later, stern action will be taken against the accused after investigation.

"After joining here in July last year, I saw that some famous institutions in the area have lost its past glory due to misdeed and mismanagement of the authorities concerned," said the UNO.

He further said the Feni madrasa girl was killed for protesting sexual harassment by a madrasa principal.

He has mainly taken the initiative to install the complaint boxes to prevent sexual harassment and improve the standard of quality education, said the UNO.

"But we must remain alert so that

head of an institution and others are not unnecessarily harassed," he added.

During a visit to Haji Abdul Jalil High School on Saturday, this correspondent found one complaint note in the UNO box.

Rezaul Azad, headmaster of Rowshan Ara Jalil High School, said the box is now a threat to stalkers. It will also curtail child marriage, corruption and nepotism.

Sayed Khanam Bushra, a Class X student at Rowshan Ara Jalil Girls High School, said "We often deal with stalkers on our way to school. As the box has been installed, from now we

can communicate with the upazila administration directly if we face such situation. It is really a great initiative by the UNO."

Nur-e Jannat Tusha, a Class IX student of the same school, said "It is really a good initiative to install such box to report sexual harassment. I think it will reduce child marriage and stalking."

Saidur Mia, a guardian in the upazila, said "I feel very happy to see the boxes at different educational institutions in the area as we can put complaints against any misdeed in the boxes from now."



A complaint box named UNO BOX has been installed at a school in Brahmanbaria's Ashuganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

CHT Land Commission meet held

The body still awaits rules of business

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The meeting of Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) Land Dispute Resolution Commission, tasked with settling the land issues in the region, was held in Bandarban yesterday, apparently without any headway.

"We are still waiting for the formulation of the rules of business to settle the fate of more than 24,000 petitions on land disputes," commission Chairman Justice Anwar-ul Haque said in yesterday's meeting.

The commission was constituted in line with the CHT Peace Accord signed in 1997 between the then Awami League government and regional political party Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS).

Of the commission members, Jyotirindra Bodhipriyo Larma (popularly known as Santu Larma), chairman of CHT Regional Council, Debasish Roy, Chakma Circle chief, Chacing Prue, Mong Circle chief, Kongjari Chowdhury, chairman of Khagrachhari Hill District Council, Brisho Ketu Chakma, chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council, and the divisional commissioner of Chattogram, were not present at yesterday's meeting.

Damaged historic nilkuthi yet to be repaired

Nilphamari police, archaeology dept trade blame over responsibility

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

The damaged roof of historic 'nilkuthi' (house for indigo business in British era) at Notkhana village, three kilometres from Nilphamari town, is yet to be repaired, 40 days after breaking of the part by labourers engaged by the district police.

Earlier on January 1, The Daily Star ran a report titled "Archaeology dept, police at odds over damage of historic building".

The government's archaeology department two years ago declared the 175-year-old building at Notkhana village in Polashbari union of Nilphamari Sadar upazila as a proposed archaeological site and set a signboard to the effect.

But to the surprise of locals, some day labourers sent by district police on December 24 last year started dismantling the roof of nilkuthi.

"As villagers put serious objection to the act, a police team went there and the sub-inspector concerned said that bricks were being collected to make a sales centre of 'Women Police Welfare Association' in the district town, as per directive from the authorities," said Mamtaj Ali Pramanik, chairman of Polashbari union parishad.

"Finally we persuaded police not to break the building but by the time, labourers damaged a portion of the structure's roof, separating around 250 bricks. Some other bricks broke into pieces," he added.

Visiting the site on Sunday, this correspondent found that the nilkuthi's partially damaged roof remained in the same condition while the separated bricks

lay on its premises with none to guard it.

"Some bricks have gone missing by this time," said Hazrat Ali, 65, who runs a makeshift tea stall nearby.

Sanjoy Kumar Roy, the then custodian of Rangpur museum, said, "I requested the additional superintendent of police in Nilphamari to arrange repair of the damaged roof but didn't get satisfactory response."

Abul Bashar Mohammad Atiqur Rahman, additional superintendent of police in Nilphamari, said, "The land on which the nilkuthi is situated belongs to us and the department concerned didn't inform us in writing about declaration of it as a proposed archaeological site. And so, they are responsible for the misunderstanding and there is no scope to repair it from our part."

On the other hand, Nahid Sultana, regional director of archaeology department in Bogura, said, "Police should repair the nilkuthi with our technical support, keeping its historic impact intact. I wrote to our director general, requesting arrangement as per rule."

According to 'Nilphamarir Itihas' (History of Nilphamari) written by Jahangir Alam Sarker (published by Bangla Academy in July 2018), British traders established the nilkuthi in 1845 as a centre for cultivation and business of indigo during the colonial era.

The traders also used a portion of it as a torture centre to punish the farmers who refused to cultivate indigo for low pay, mentions the book.



Without any arrangement of regular guarding, bricks removed from the proposed archaeological site of 175-year-old 'nilkuthi' at Notkhana village in Polashbari union of Nilphamari Sadar upazila lie in front of the historic structure on Sunday. The district police, who employed labourers to break the structure on December 24 last year, stopped the work shortly after serious objection by locals.

PHOTO: STAR

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার			
পরিচালকের কার্যালয়			
সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সিলেট			
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি			
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়।	
২	সংগ্রাহক/স্বত্বাধিকারীর নাম	সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল।	
৩	অর্থায়নের উৎস	আসবাবপত্র খাতে প্রাপ্ত বরাদ্দ হইতে।	
৪	আহবানকৃত দরপত্রের স্মারক ও তারিখ	স্মারক নং-ওমেকহাসি/দশা/২০১৯-২০/৮১৪/১২ তারিখ ০২/০২/২০২০ইং।	
৫	দরপত্রের নাম/কাজের বিবরণ	২০১৯-২০২০ইং অর্থ বছরে সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতালের আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহের দরপত্র।	
৬	সংগ্রাহক স্বত্বাধিকারীর জেলা	সিলেট।	
৭	ক্রয় প্রক্রিয়া	পিপিআর-২০০৮ মোতাবেক।	
৮	দরপত্রদাতাদের যোগ্যতা	সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন সকল উৎপাদনকারী/সরবরাহকারী/এজেন্ট ইত্যাদি প্রতিষ্ঠান।	
৯	দরপত্র তফসিলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	প্রতিটি কাজের প্রতিটি সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ ১৫০০/- (এক হাজার পাঁচশত) টাকা মাত্র চালানোর মাধ্যমে কোড নং- (১) (২) (৭) (১) (১) (০) (০) (০) (০) (২) (৩) (৬) (৬)-এ বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, সিলেটে জমা প্রদান করিয়া চালানের মূলকপি অত্র হাসপাতালে দাখিলপূর্বক সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করিতে হইবে।	
১০	বায়নার টাকা	দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী/নিয়মাবলী মোতাবেক।	
১১	দরপত্র তফসীল বিক্রয়, দর প্রস্তাব গ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতালে পরিচালকের কার্যালয়।	
১২	দরপত্র তফসীল দাখিলের স্থান	সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতালে পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, সিলেট ও পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সিলেট।	
১৩	দরপত্র তফসীল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৮/০২/২০২০ইং তারিখ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।	
১৪	দরপত্র খোলার দস্তরের নাম ও ঠিকানা	পরিচালক, সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতালের কার্যালয়, সিলেট।	
১৫	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	১৯/০২/২০২০ইং বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।	
১৬	দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৯/০২/২০২০ইং বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা (দরপত্রদাতাদের সম্মুখে যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।	
বিঃ দ্রঃ বিস্তারিত বর্ণনা ও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী/নিয়মাবলী আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহের দরপত্র তফসীল মোতাবেক।			
ব্রিগেড জেঃ মোঃ ইউনুসুর রহমান পরিচালক			
জিডি-২২৪		সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সিলেট	

Three punished for illegal sand lifting from Jhinai

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A mobile court yesterday awarded punishment to three people for illegally lifting sand from the Jhinai river in Tangail's Basail upazila.

Of then, two were fined and jailed for different terms and the rest was fined only.

Razu Miah was jailed for two months while Jahidul Islam for three months. The court also fined them Tk 2 lakh each.

Mohammad Monu Miah was fined Tk 2 lakh, said Executive Magistrate Mohammad Rokonzaman who led the court.

The court also damaged three excavators that were used to lift sand from the river. The excavators were later burnt following the court's order.

The executive magistrate said a section of local influential sand traders had been lifting sand from the Jhinai river, a branch of the Jamuna river, in Basail's Nothkhola area for long.

Being informed, the mobile court conducted a drive in the area and detained six people.

Of them, the sand lifters were punished and three labourers were freed.



An excavator that was used to lift sand from the Jhinai river in Tangail's Basail upazila was burnt yesterday during a mobile court drive.

PHOTO: STAR

Locals said the influential traders continued illegal sand lifting from the river for the last few years, posing erosion threat to an important bridge on Tangail-Basail Road nearby.

It is also threatening nearby Nothkhola Government Primary School. Earlier, a portion of the school and its Shaheed Minar were devoured by the river.