



Seven months into construction, this bridge at Poltadanga Point of the Mathabhanga River in Chuadanga’s Alamdanga upazila is yet to be opened for vehicular movement due to lack of approach road on one side.

PHOTO:COLLECTED

New bridge lies unused due to lack of approach road

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

A bridge built seven months ago at Poltadanga Point of the Mathabhanga River in Chuadanga’s Alamdanga upazila cannot be opened for vehicular movement due to lack of approach road on one side.

The construction of one-kilometre approach road on Poltadanga side was completed along with the bridge but the approach road on the other side at Moheshpur cannot be made as some locals are resisting acquisition of lands for it, said officials of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED).

Under the supervision of local LGED office, the bridge construction work started in April 2018 and it was completed in August 2019 with the government allocated fund of Tk 7 crore.

“But the delay in opening the bridge causes frustration among some 2 lakh people of 36 villages in Chuadanga and Meherpur, who were waiting for it for long. Especially a large number of school and college goers of the areas would be benefited if the bridge was made functional,” said Farook Hossain, a high school teacher of Poltadanga village.

There is a big bazar at Poltadanga on the

Mathabhanga river but people of around 13 villages on the opposite side find it difficult to come to the bazar, locals said.

“Business and economy related activities will see a boost if the bridge is opened,” Yakub Ali, general secretary of Alamdanga upazila unit of Awami League, also a resident of Poltadanga village.

Abdur Rashid, upazila engineer of LGED in Alamdanga, said, “With the help of local political leaders, we are trying to persuade the people of Moheshpur area to solve the problem.”

There are allegations that a number of people of Moheshpur have built

various establishments after occupying government khas lands and they are the main barrier to the acquisition of land for the approach road.

“Interest of a large number of people cannot be ignored for a few selfish people. The administration should take quick action in this regard,” said Nasir Uddin Master of Poltadanga village.

Alamdanga Upazila Nirbahi Officer Liton Ali said legal action would be taken soon against the illegal occupiers.

Contacted, lawmaker of Chuadanga-1 Solaiman Haque Joardar Selun said he has instructed the local administration to take proper steps in this regard.

3 abducted in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Armed criminals abducted three activists of Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS-MN Lama faction) from Rangamati’s Baghaichhari upazila early yesterday.

The three are Samiron Chakma, 40, a local ward member, Purno Kishore Chakma, 65, a retired primary schoolteacher, and Merin Chakma, 32. They all hail from different villages in the upazila.

“The three were picked up at gunpoint from their homes in different villages,” Baghaichhari Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Sunil Bihari Chakma quoted locals as saying.

Officer in Charge of Baghaichhari Police Station MA Manzur said all of them were involved in activities of PCJSS-MN Lama faction.

“They might have been abducted for being supporters of the faction, or, being relatives of some of its frontline leaders,” the OC said.

Schoolboy missing for 10 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Class X student of Bhaluka upazila in Mymensingh has remained missing since he went to Dhaka on March 4.

The boy, Himel Hasan Emon, 16, son of Atiqul Islam of Chandpur village in Bhaluka, is a tenth grader at local Mollikbari Shaheed Nazim Uddin High School, police said.

Failing to trace him at all possible places, the family members lodged a general diary (GD) with Bhaluka Police Station on March 11.

“Emon went out of his house on March 4 to visit a relative’s house in Dhaka and just after reaching Dhaka, he talked with his family members on mobile.

But afterwards, his mobile was found off,” OC Mohammad Mainuddin said, referring to the GD.

Drives are on to trace the boy, he added.

Wild elephants kill kid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A four-year-old boy was trampled to death by wild elephants in Chattogram’s Boalkhali upazila early yesterday.

The deceased, Mohammad Akib, was son of Shamsul Alam, police said.

Boalkhali Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Achia Khatun said a group of nine people, including some family members of Akib, were returning home from a religious gathering around 1:30am, when they came under attack from a herd of wild elephants in Madham Ahalla Koroldenga area.

Being chased by the elephants, at one stage, Akib fell from his father’s lap and one of the elephants trampled him to death on the spot, said the UNO.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body, Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) of Boalkhali Police Station Mohammad Rasel said.

Forestland freed from illegal occupiers

Forest department recovered 23 acres of land in Madhupur during a drive from March 8 to March 13

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Forest department recovered a total of 23 acres of forestland from grabbers and demolished many banana and pineapple orchards under Gachhabari forest area in Madhupur upazila in the last couple of days.

They made the recovery during a drive that began on March 8 and continued till March 13.

Local people have been cultivating different fruits and spices like banana, pineapple, turmeric and zinger occupying lands inside the Sal Forest in Gachhabari, Chawra Baid, Shukonpacha and Chitakhola areas for the last six to seven years, forest officials said.

Beat Officer of Gachhabari Forest Mofiz Uddin said they will plant different local varieties of trees

like Jarul, Hijol and Rain Tree on the recovered forestland in Chawra Baid area.

Jamal Hossain Talukder, assistant forest conservator in Madhupur said they will continue such drive to recover the grabbed forest land in Madhupur.

The drive has been greatly hindered due to shortage of manpower and interference of local politicians and public representatives, he added.

Mentionable, the traditional Sal Forest in Madhupur is shrinking very fast due to nonstop tree felling and illegal encroachment.

The unique habitat of flora and fauna has already been shrunk to 8,000 acres from 45,000 acres in the last few decades, forest officials said, adding that over 25,000 acres of forestland are grabbed by a number of local influential people and outsiders.



Workers, employed by the forest department, cut down many banana trees at a grabbed forestland at Gachhabari in Tangail’s Madhupur upazila.

PHOTO:STAR



A 10-wheeler tipper truck without any licence plate parked beside a road near Bhuapur Bus Stand. Fatalities and injuries caused due to reckless movement of such unregistered heavy vehicles carrying sand are on the rise in Bhuapur.

PHOTO:STAR

Illegal sand traders causing havoc in Bhuapur

Their unregistered trucks causing fatalities, damaging rural roads

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Unregistered 10-wheeler tipper trucks engaged by illegal sand traders have been causing havoc in Bhuapur upazila for a long time due to indifference of the authorities concerned.

Injuries and fatalities caused by reckless driving of drivers -- majority of whom are unlicensed -- of the heavy 10-wheelers are becoming a common phenomenon as they zigzag through narrow village roads of the upazila at high speeds.

The trucks, usually loaded above their full capacity, are also causing permanent damage to rural roads that were not constructed to withstand such loads on a regular basis.

Locals said the fleet of trucks are maintained and operated by sand traders who illegally extract sand from the Jamuna river at different points -- east side of the Bangabandhu Bridge, Jigatala, Govindasi and Sirajkandi in Bhuapur upazila and Jokarchar and Pungli in Kalihati upazila.

A few months ago, a woman died on the spot after she was run over by an unregistered 10-wheeler sand truck on Bhuapur-Tarakandi road in Bazar area.

In another incident three weeks back, several people were injured, two severely, in Khupibari area on the east road

between Bhuapur and the Bangabandhu Bridge as two tipper trucks loaded with sand collided head on with each other.

Char Bhaduri resident Abdul Bari and one of the truckers, Toni Miah, was maimed for life, leaving their dependents in despair, according to the locals.

Just several weeks back, a pedestrian named Jahangir Hossain had his ribcage fractured when a reckless 10-wheeler sand truck rammed him on Tangail-Bhuapur road in Shialkhol Bazar area, they also said.

Asked whether the Truck Workers’ Union in Bhuapur upazila has any responsibility in the movement of such unregistered trucks in the upazila, its General Secretary Mainul Islam Talukder said the responsibility lies with the law enforcement authorities concerned.

Most of the unregistered trucks plying the roads in the upazila are being operated from outside Bhuapur, he claimed. “Some 25 trucks are registered with the truck workers’ union in Bhuapur while the rest don’t have any affiliation with the union.”

Contacted, Ali Akbar Khan, an official at the Local Government and Engineering Department in Bhuapur, said the 10-wheelers should be made off-limits to roads in the upazila as the overloaded

vehicles have been damaging rural roads intended for lighter vehicles.

A number of local union parishad chairmen have already raised their objections as the overloaded trucks have been causing damage to the rural roads, he said, adding, “The higher authorities were already informed of the matter.”

As to why police are not taking action against unregistered vehicles in the upazila, Rashidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bhuapur Police Station, said the traffic department of police is responsible for taking action against any such unregistered trucks.

He however said the police would take action against the illegal vehicles with directives from the higher authorities.

Confirming that it is unlawful for any unregistered heavy vehicle to ply rural roads, regional roads or the highways in the district, Rafiqul Islam Sarkar, traffic inspector (administration) in Tangail, said the traffic department monitors vehicle movement on the highway between the capital and the Bangabandhu Bridge in Elenga area.

“There’s no deployment of traffic police [personnel] in Bhuapur upazila. However, we will launch drives against the unregistered heavy trucks [in Bhuapur] as soon as possible,” he added.