

National

Accommodation crisis in Chapainawabganj jail

Construction of Gopalganj prison left half done

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, June 10: Like many other prisons of the country, the district jail has been grappled with numerous problems, including accommodation crisis and lack of medical services, reports UNB.

According to sources, over 500 prisoners have been forced to live in eight wards against the capacity of 153 prisoners. Their plights worsen further during sultry weather, as there is no fans in their wards. Even the foods they are provided with everyday are not worthy of eating.

There are allegations that jail wardens demand bribe from the visitors when they want to see their imprisoned relatives. Allegations are also there that the jail wardens supply drug to a section of prisoners.

A prisoner who was released recently said most of the prisoners who take drug are now sick and there is no arrangement for their medical treatment. Fever, cough and intestinal ailments are common among the jail inmates, he said.

There are only one doctor and a pharmacist in the jail.

A high-powered inspection committee was formed to inspect the overall condition of the prison. But the committee hardly visits the jail.

When contacted, the jail authorities said there were 542 prisoners in the jail as of May 31.

Another report from Gopalganj says: Construction of a full fledged district jail undertaken in November 1998 at a cost of Tk 7.41 crore has been left half done by the contractor in the absence of part payment of the bill.

Considering the miseries of the overcrowded sub-jail the government had directed the Public Works Department to construct a full fledged district jail for which 7.5 acres of land were acquired.

The work included boundary wall, two-storied barrack for the convicted prisoners, two-

storied barrack for under trial prisoners, female prisoners' ward, adolescent ward, hospital and living quarters for the jail super and staff.

Although the revised estimate of the work raised the project cost to Tk 16.25 crore, the government has so far released Tk 3.77 crore to PWD.

With sharp increase in crimes the number of prisoners rose to more than 400 in the sub-jail which has an accommodation capacity of 76 prisoners.

The sub-jail is beset with many problems, including inadequate supply of food, paucity of water, sanitation and health care.

When contacted the jailer admitted inadequacy of basic needs in the sub-jail. He said problem of medical treatment is acute and in most cases they are to shift the ailing prisoners to Sadar Hospital.

He stressed the need for early completion of the district jail to overcome the problems.

Slaughter ground of liberation period remains uncared

BARISAL, June 10: The slaughter ground of the historic liberation period under Nalchity Upazilla of Jhalakathi district has been lying uncared for about 30 years after the freedom of this country till writing of this report, reports BSS.

The people have been horrified with the remembrance of the slaughtering here till now. At least nine freedom fighters and many inhabitants were killed at this slaughtering place of this Upazilla on May 11, 1971.

On May 11, 1971 the Officer-in-Charge of Nalchity Thana invited the local eminent persons to come to thana headquarters at night for an emergency meeting. According to police constables, the meeting was arranged to discuss about an incident of looting the oil depot and the food godown of Jhalakathi before March 25. A total of 126 prominent figures were present in the meeting. But without discussing the proposed agenda, an anti-liberation Peace Committee was formed there.

Those persons who disagreed with the Peace Committee were gunned down later.

The 12 invitees, Krishna Mohun Nandi, Shyamanta Kanta Roy, Dasharath Kunda, Bhashan Chandra Podder, Sukumar Chandra Banik, Padma Banik, Haripada Roy, Dasharath Kunda, Bhashan Chandra Banarjee, Khitish

Chandra Dey, Atul Chandra Kurhi and Nepal Chandra Kurhi were listed, among others, in the mass killing programme on the day. The listed persons were forced to stay two days in Thana hazat and later they were taken to Tamakpatty Khal areas of the town at dead of night on May 13. There the then Pakistani police forces gunned down these persons.

Among them, Khitish Chandra Dey, Kalipada Banik and Ani Chandra Dey luckily escaped death on that day. Khitish Chandra Dey got bullet injury while the other two had been unhurt.

The place, identified as slaughter ground, has remained uncared till now.

Steps sought to check travelling on rooftops of vehicles

From Akhteruzzaman

SIRAJGANJ, June 10: The bad practice of travelling on the rooftop of buses and trucks is going on unabated along the Dhaka-Bogra highway following the worst-ever road accident at Konabari in Sirajganj district. Drivers of buses, trucks and other vehicles are driving their vehicles recklessly caring less for passengers and passers-by alike.

Moreover, unfit vehicles are also plying along the northern region route regularly. Their is none to check the unfit vehicles emitting black smoke.

The latest worst-ever road disaster occurred on April 28 last where 55 people died and 150 passengers died.

A local Non-governmental Organisation's (NGO) survey report said hundreds of vehicles cross the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge every day. After opening of this bridge drivers started driving recklessly along this route. More than 100 small and big road accidents took place besides the worst-ever accident at Konabari. The survey report said about 400 people died in the road accidents. Even many of them turned disabled for good.

Usually buses and trucks are the only mode of transport for poor rural people in the northern region. They frequently travel here and there on rooftop of buses and trucks. They have to pay less amount to the bus and truck helpers and conductors. Bus and truck drivers and conductors also grab this opportunity of their poverty and dump them into the overloaded vehicles.

However, after the worst road disaster on April 29 at Konabari where 55 people were killed the Civil Surgeon and the Storekeeper of Sirajganj hospital could not be traced. After the accident they were not available at the hospital. As a result so many people died without treatment. The news was published in various newspapers, radio, television and through ATN channel, but till filing of this report none of them were punished.



No lesson from the worst-ever road accident: This is a common scene on Bogra-Dhaka Road. The recent worst-ever road accident at Konabari in Sirajganj district failed to teach a good lesson to both the drivers and passengers alike. At least this picture testifies this where (left) some fishermen are seen travelling all the way to Dhaka on board a loaded BRTC truck to sell their merchandise and (right) another overloaded bus plying near the local police outpost.

— Star photo

The local political leaders under and the suffering people demanded immediate legal action against the culprits for negligence of duty. They also demanded steps to check the fitness of vehicles regularly and checking the trend of travelling on rooftop of plying vehicles immediately.

Jamalpur named after Hazrat Shah Jamal (R)

From Muhammad Ali

JAMALPUR, June 10: Many saints and Aullas came to this country from different parts of the world to propagate their respective religions and emancipate people from injustice and exploitation of the ruthless tyrants who used to rule this country during those days.

Hazrat Shah Jamal (R) was one of those Aullas or saints who came to Jamalpur from Yemen in the Middle East. About 900 years ago, this place was called 'Sannasi-ganj' situated on the banks of the Old Brahmaputra. The entire area was a forest bereft of human habitation. Much later the area was renamed as 'Jamalpur' after the famous saint, Hazrat Shah Jamal (R).

Long after people started inhabiting in this area where members of the Hindu community built a Shiva temple. It was a time between 1100-1203 AD when Sen of ancient Gaur of Bengal had sovereignty over the entire area. The locality in and around Jamalpur town where the temple was situated is popularly known as Shiva-para. Sub-

sequently the temple turned into a monastery. Monks from the remote corners of the country used to visit this temple. Hence the temple and the area came to be known as 'Sannasi-ganj'.

During the rule of the great Mughal Emperor Akbar (1552-1605) Hazrat Shah Jamal (R) came to this area for preaching Islam. Enchanted by the scenic beauty of the area, Hazrat Shah Jamal (R) set up his camp on the bank of the old Brahmaputra.

It is said that Hazrat Shah Jamal (R) was a close kin of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) of Sylhet. A group of saints numbering 360 arrived in the northern Bengal. Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) was the leader of the group. There are differences of opinion on the exact location of the mazar (grave) of Hazrat Shah Jamal (R). Alhaj Golam Mohtaimun in the book 'Gono Etibritta' expressed doubt about the existence of Shah Jamal (R)'s mazar in the district.

According to another version the Dargah of Hazrat Shah Jamal is said to be situated at the western side of the town.

People from far and near visit the mazar to perform urs.

Despite controversies raging round the mazar of Hazrat Shah Jamal (R), it is established beyond any shadow of doubt that he once came and stayed in Jamalpur. It is also a non-controversial fact that he hailed from Yemen and came to this part of the world via Multan to preach Islam.

Before Shah Jamal (R), another great saint Hazrat Shah Kamal (R) came to Jamalpur for preaching Islam. He also came from Multan in 1503 and set up his camp at Durmut on the bank of the River Brahmaputra. The mazar of Shah Kamal (R) is still there at Durmut. After the demise of Shah Kamal (R), Zoin Shah (R), Zafar Shah (R), Chup Shah (R) and a number of other saints, following the footsteps of Shah Kamal (R) and Shah Kamal (R), raised the flag of Islam in this part of the world.

Although a foreigner, Hazrat Shah Jamal (R) is still remembered with reverence and gratitude in the minds of the people here who named the district after him.



Hazrat Shah Jamal (R), the great saint came to this part of the world to preach Islam from Yemen via Multan. He was laid to rest on the bank of the Old Brahmaputra in Jamalpur town which was named after him.

— Star photo

News snaps

Snatcher gets 2-yr RI

HABIGANJ, June 10: A court here on Tuesday convicted a man and sentenced him to two years' Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) under Public Safety Act (PSA) in a snatching case, reports UNB.

The convict — Kausar of Barabaha village in Sadar upazila — was also fined Tk 10,000, in default, to suffer six months more in jail. According to prosecution, Kausar snatched Tk 5,300 from a van driver Mohammad Salek from in front of Syed Nasiruddin Academy here on April 1 this year. After examining records and witnesses, Judge Abdur Rashid handed down the judgement.

Heroin seized

RAJBARI, June 10: Police seized 500 grams of heroin and caught a man from Daulatdia launch ghat here on Friday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip off, police searched the body of Israfil Morol and recovered the drug from beneath his undergarment. Israfil was travelling by a Dhaka-bound bus from Benapole. Estimated cost of the heroin is Tk 40 lakh, police said.

Hemp smuggler convicted

KURIGRAM, June 10: The special judge of a tribunal here on Sunday sentenced a man to six years' imprisonment for smuggling hemp, reports UNB.

The court also fined the convict Phool Miah of Soulmari village in Roumari upazila with Tk 6,000, in default, to suffer one year RI more. Police arrested Phool Miah along with 6 kilograms of hemp on October 8, 1997. The court found him guilty after examining reports and witnesses.

Installation of regulator

PANCHAGARH, June 10: Installation work of a regulator by LGED in the River Versha under Tetulia upazila is in full swing, reports BSS.

Official sources said, installation of six-volt regulator is being done for irrigation. The work will cost Taka 51.90 lakh. With completion of the work, 700 hectares of land will be brought under irrigation during dry season.

Arms, valuables looted

BOGRA, June 10: Armed robbers burst into a house at Pirobadra village in Shibganj upazila and looted arms and valuables on Saturday, reports UNB.

Police said the bandits stormed into the house of Nuru Master at about 1 am, beat up his family members and looted valuables from the house after tying them up with ropes. They also took away a licenced gun and six rounds of bullet.

Cash, valuables looted

NAOGAON, June 10: A band of bandits entered into a BRAC office at Bijipur in Manda upazila and looted cash and valuables worth about Tk two lakh on Saturday night, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the robbers broke into the office and looted a motorcycle, VCP sets and cash tying up its night guard with rope. They also beat up seven BRAC employees, including two women. They fled away before the police reached the spot.

Abductor jailed

PATUAKHALI, June 10: A youth was condemned to 10 years' imprisonment by a court here recently in an abduction case, reports UNB.

The court also fined the convict, Shahabuddin of village Chhotachar Kajor in Galachipa upazila, Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer six years more RI. According to prosecution, Shahabuddin aided by his associates abducted his co-villager Afroza, a madrasa student, on Jan 31, 1998 as she refused to comply with his illicit proposal. Police rescued the girl after her brother filed a case with a Magistrate court. After examining the witnesses, the Judge found the youth guilty of kidnapping and pronounced the verdict recently.

Housewife beaten to death

BAGERHAT, June 10: A pregnant housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband at Mongla town here recently as she tried to prevent him from gambling, reports UNB.

Police said, the husband, Rukuddus during a quarrel with his wife Hafiza alias Rokeya, 19, beat her to death and dumped the body into a pond pouring poison on her mouth. According to villagers, Rukuddus had tortured Rokeya, mother of one child, several times earlier while she tried to prevent him from gambling. Autopsy of the body was performed at Sadar Hospital here.

Man gets life term

HABIGANJ, June 10: A court here has sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for marrying a girl against her will, reports UNB.

The court also fined Md Imran Ali of Tugli village in Bahubal upazila Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer six months more in jail. According to prosecution, Ali forcibly married Swapna Begum of Baniachang village in 1995. Later, Swapna filed a case against Ali under Women and Children Repression (Prevention) Act and police charge-sheeted him after investigation. After examining the records and witnesses, the Additional District and Sessions Judge handed down the judgement.

Coordination body meet held

KHAGRACHHARI, June 10: A meeting of Khagrachhari Hill District Development and Co-ordination Committee was held recently at the Zila Parishad's auditorium. Chairman of Zila Parishad Jatindralal Tripathy presided over the meeting, reports BSS.

Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachhari Ashrafur Mokbul, Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad M Bedar Hossain, Police Super and members of the Zila Parishad and officials were present in the meeting. The meeting reviewed law and order and co-ordination for the on going development work.

Youth killed by lightning

PATUAKHALI, June 10: A youth was killed by lightning at Amkhola village in Galachipa upazila recently, reports UNB.

Family sources said Zahangir Hossain, 27, was struck by the thunderbolt while working in the field at about noon.

Uplift projects implemented

PANCHAGARH, June 10: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been implementing four development projects here at a cost of Taka 40.58 lakh in the current fiscal, reports BSS.

The projects included construction of different rural roads. Of the total works, 80 per cent have already been completed and the rest will be completed by June next. After completion of the works the local dwellers would be benefited through the development projects.

Elderly couple arrested

CHUADANGA, June 10: Police arrested an elderly couple from their house in Masterpara of the town on Saturday night for their alleged involvement in killing their daughter-in-law, reports UNB.

They are Khokon Kumar Sadhwa and Rekha Rani Sadhwa, father and mother-in-law of Shikha Rani Sadhwa. Police said Bishnu Kumar Sadhwa aided by his parents beat his wife Shikha to death on Tuesday. Police recovered her body the following day and filed a case against three people, Bishnu, Khokon and Rekha, after postmortem. Bishnu went into hiding after the murder.

Girl killed in road mishap

RAJBARI, June 10: A girl was crushed under the wheels of a running train at the Guchhagram area near Goalondo Bazar Thursday morning, reports UNB.

Police said the Goalondoghat-bound train ran over Ashtami, 18, daughter of Krishta Das, when she was walking along the railway track. A case was filed in this connection.

Swoop on prisoners

JHALAKATI, June 10: Seven inmates of the district jail were injured and hospitalised as jail guards beat them up on Sunday, reports UNB.

The jail wardens swooped on the prisoners as they informed the DC about inadequate food supply by the jail authority. They put the allegation when the DC came to visit the jail. Some of the complainants were also kept confined in the cells as punitive measures. Jailor Mosarrat Hossain said seven prisoners received minor injuries as the guards beat them up when they tried to create chaos in the jail. Four of the injured — Harun Molla, Mamun, Kamal and Balai — were admitted to the Jail Hospital while Riaz, Mamun and Awal were given first aid.