

National

# Land grabbing along highways in Magura

From Hossain Seraj

MAGURA, July 18: Influential people have been building unauthorised structures on both sides of highways in the district under the nose of the authorities concerned.

According to an estimate, about two hundred acres of lands stretching from Alomkhali to Rajdharpur in Magura district have already been occupied. Besides, a section of locals are allegedly trying to grab more lands along Magura-Jhenidah and Magura-Fardpur highways in connivance with local *Tahashil* office.

A reliable source with land office said no step could be taken against illegal occupants due to departmental complication and pressure from the local influential people.

Public lands in Alomkhali Bazar, Issakhada Bazar, Police Line, Stadium, Bhalna Square, Primary Training Institute, Pamandual Baparipara, Ramnagar Bazar and Wapda Square have been occupied. Many illegal structures have been built on the lands.

"It's an open secret that the land officials are party to the encroachment as authorities concerned often appear nonchalant regarding building structures on public lands," said Mustafizur Rahman, a renowned businessman in the town.

"I pay a certain amount of money to officials concerned every month for my illegal structure built on government land," said an owner of welding shop near Vocational Institute on condition of anonymity.

Another illegal occupant Hafizur Rahman in Magura Stadium said as per verbal contact with the officials concerned I started business here. "If they ask me to leave the place, I shall remove my shop", he added.

When contacted, Noor Islam, executive engineer of Magura Roads and Highways Department, admitted the presence of illegal structures on public lands. About verbal contract regard-

ing building structures the executive engineer expressed his ignorance.

He, however, said he has already listed the illegal structures and within a very short time the structures will be demolished.

When contacted, M Akbar Ali, the superintendent of police, I cannot take any step against anyone unless I have specific charges.

UNB from Mymensingh reports: Amid hectic government campaign for afforestation in a bid to protect ecological balance of the country about 30,000 acres of government forest lands were grabbed by influential quarters in Mymensingh district.

Indiscriminate felling of trees for burning bricks and massive construction work has threatened the already vulnerable ecological balance.

Forest Department sources said a section of very influential people comprising political leaders, industrialists, businessmen and some other organisations through fake documents grabbed these lands.

More than two hundred cases remained pending with different courts in this regard. Illegal occupants with the overt and covert support of a section of dishonest officials of Forest and Land Survey Department grabbed the forestland. It is alleged.

The government lost about 7,000 acres of forest in Rashulpur range, 20,000 acres in Bhaluka range, 1000 acres in Durgapur range and 2,000 acres in Rangtira range.

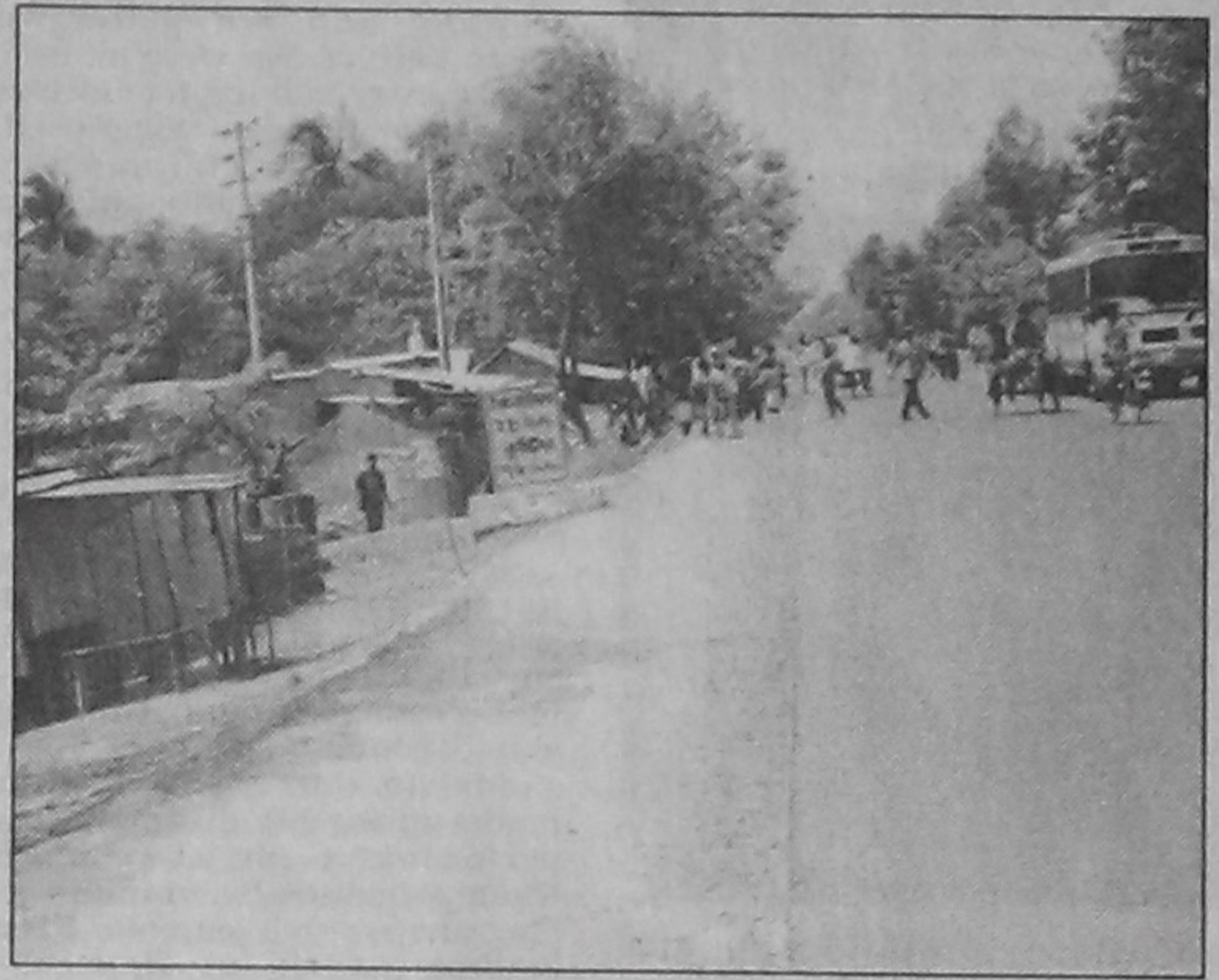
Though a case was pending with the court on the ownership of land, a non-government organisation Social Marketing Company (SMC) has been continuing its construction work in Bhaluka range area, officials said.

Legal advisor of Forest Department told that SMC violating order of the court is continuing its construction on government forestland.

Local elite urged the government to stop leasing the government *khas* land at the same *mouza* of the forest to stop illegal occupation.



Fortune at the cost of people's money: Satkhira is an erosion prone district. Every year hundreds of families become homeless due to the wrath of the River Ichhamoti. Efforts are being made by the Water Development Board authorities to check erosion by the river. Crores of taka are being spent every year for the purpose, but due to below standard work the hard earned money of innocent people are lost entirely. Photo shows bricks of the embankment along the Ichhamoti has been falling down just after completion of its work. -Star photo by A.K.M.



Some illegal structures have been built along Magura-Jhenidah highway. -Star photo

## News snaps

### Condemnation

SAVAR, July 18: The Jahangirnagar University Journalists' Association (JUJA) on Monday condemned the killing of Shamsur Rahman, the special correspondent of 'The Daily Janakantha' by suspected extremist groups on Sunday, a JUJA press release said, reports BSS.

JUJA expressed deep concern over the killing and urged the government to take immediate action against the killers and ensure security of the journalists across the country.

### 15,000 fail to get enlisted

BANBARBAN, July 18: About 15,000 tribal people living in remote bordering areas of Bandarban and Rangamati hills districts adjacent to India and Myanmar have failed to enlist their names in the recent voter registration list. Last date for voter registration was June 30, reports BSS.

Local tribal leaders said, about 10,000 tribal inhabitants of 28 remote tribal villages of Ruma, Thanchi, Alikadam and Ruangchari upazilas of Bandarban district failed to be included in voter lists for lack of communication. Similarly 5,000 remote tribal citizen of Bilachhari upazila of Rangamati district failed to include their name in voter lists. District election officials said, if they get any complaint about exclusion from the voter lists, they will take special arrangement to include them in the voter lists.

Bir Bahadur, MP, Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, told BSS, the inclusion of the tribal, living in the remote inaccessible areas must be ensured in the voter lists. He appealed to the Government to include them in the voter lists by special arrangement and give them opportunity to exercise their fundamental right of vote by establishing vote centers in the remote areas, if necessary.

### Work progressing

KURIGRAM, July 18: Construction of Dharia Bridge is expected to be completed before the scheduled time as the work is going on in full swing to open the 648-metre bridge for traffic by January 2003, official sources said here, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of the bridge on Kurigram-Bhurungamari highway, which is now under construction at a cost of Taka 98 crore. Meanwhile, a box culvert on the Kurigram side, 100 per cent earth filling work on the Pateswari end, 60 per cent of ferry connecting road, 39 per cent of stone bolder supplying work, 23 per cent of RCC blocks building work and 90 per cent of contractor site office have been completed by the time. With the construction of the bridge, communications ministry sources said, Nageswari, Bhurungamari and Fulbari Upazila will come under direct communications network with rest of the country.

### Uplift programme

SYLHET, July 18: Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury has said that the present government has undertaken a massive development programme under which the remote areas are being linked to modern communication network, reports BSS.

He was inaugurating the newly-constructed metal road at Jangal under Sylhet Sadar Upazila on Sunday. The Speaker also opened the newly-constructed Taka 17.50 lakh Shafiqur Rahman High School Bhaban. Facilities Department of the Education Ministry constructed the school building. He also laid the foundation stone of two new academic buildings of Sylhet Government Agragami Girls' High School, to be built at a total cost of Taka 30.82 lakh by the Facilities Department.

### Labourer murdered

KISHOREGANJ, July 18: A labourer was killed by his opponent at Kathpatti in Bhairab Bazar over a trifling matter on Wednesday reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said a tussle ensued between labourer Tara Miah, 28, and Ejazul, a boatman, when the latter tried to obstruct Tara Miah from carrying some bundles of bamboo to a certain destination on the river route at 7 am. As the men of Ejazul beat Tara Miah mercilessly and three pebbles at him, he jumped into the river to escape the attack. After searching for hours, his body was recovered from the river at 11:30 am. Tara Miah was a resident of Jagannathpur in Bhairab town.

### Construction of UP complexes

CHUADANGA, July 18: Two union parishad complexes are now under construction here at a cost of Taka 50 lakh, reports BSS.

The complex belong to 'Hardi' union parishad and 'Dawki' union parishad under Alamdanga upazila. An official source said, so far 30 per cent construction of Hardi and 10 per cent work of Dawki union parishad complex have been completed. The work of both the union parishad complexes are expected to be completed by this year. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been implementing the schemes.

### Viral fever spreads

NETRAKONA, July 18: Viral fever has been spreading in different areas here for the past few weeks, reports BSS.

Report reaching here said, hundreds of people have been suffering from high fever accompanied with cough, headache and body pain. Out patient departments of various hospitals are crowded with patient of viral infection.

### Uplift projects implemented

MADARIPUR, July 18: The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) will implement 42 development projects here at a cost of Taka 2.80 crore in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

Official sources said, the projects include construction of rural roads, bridge and culverts in four upazilas. Upazila-wise break-up are 12 projects in Sadar upazila, 10 projects in Kalkini, 10 in Rajoir and 10 projects in Sibchar upazilas.

### Workshop

BARISAL, July 18: A daylong workshop on the 'Integrated Children Welfare Programme' was held at the conference room of the divisional commissioner recently, reports BSS.

The workshop was organised jointly by the Local Administration and the UNICEF. Presided over by the Deputy Commissioner M Alauddin. The function was attended by the Additional Divisional Commissioner Mujibar Rahman as chief guest. UNICEF chief ABM Tarikul Alam and Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police Satyendra Nath Barai were the special guests on this occasion. Forty-five persons including journalists, educationists, social workers, government officials and NGO representatives attended this workshop.

### Loan for poor

MADARIPUR, July 18: Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) disbursed a loan worth about Taka 1.64 crore here during last fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the loan was disbursed among 3100 farmers and destitute. The loan was sanctioned for Boro cultivation and for activities involving income generation. An amount of Taka 1.07 crore were disbursed among 2021 cooperative members for poverty alleviation and about Taka 57 lakh among 1,079 members of 66 cooperative societies as crop loan.

### Suicide

BARISAL, July 18: Son of a municipal commissioner allegedly committed suicide at his Aikenda residence on Monday noon, reports UNB.

Police said Murad Khan, 29, son of Sagordi municipal commissioner Montu Kha, killed himself by hanging from the ceiling. Cause behind the suicide could be known immediately. A UD case was filed.

### Sugar price up

KURIGRAM, July 18: Sugar price in country's frontier districts has shot up as smuggling of the item from India has marked a sharp fall due to tension stemming from the recent killing of two Bangladeshis by BSF, reports UNB.

Sugar was sold at Tk 50 per kg on Saturday in local markets of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur and Gopbandha districts. Cross-border trade in the region remained stopped after the killing of two Bangladeshis at Khalishakotal village by the Indian border guards on Wednesday, pushing up the price of sugar. Usually, Indian sugar dominates the local markets as its price cheaper than the indigenous one. There are 50 sugar dealers in the region, but they hardly draw sugar from mills, according to officials.

## Attack on Gangachara settlers: 80 chargesheeted under PSA

From Mozammel Haq

RANGPUR, July 18: Gangachara Police have submitted chargesheet against 80 persons under Public Safety Act (PSA), on charge of arson, looting and attack on the house of over 100 landless families, settled in government *khas* lands at Char Hajipara village in Gangachara upazila, police sources said.

On April 18 last, in broad day light hundreds of musclemen and terrorists equipped with sticks and fire arms attacked unarmed landless settlers. They wanted to grab the *khas* lands. A bidi merchant Hasrat Mohini and his son Haider Ali of Haragach *Baridra* lead the attack.

At least 50 landless persons including women and children were injured. The attackers looted about 100 houses of the landless settlers. They damaged and set on fire the houses.

Afterwards Naveb Ali, on behalf of the victim landless families, lodged a case with the Gangachara police naming 79 accused persons for their involvement in the attack.

Police, however, handed over the case to Detective Branch (DB) police for enquiry.

Atiar Rahman, Inspector of DB

police completed his inquiry in two months and submitted the chargesheets against 80 persons on June last. All the accused persons were chargesheeted under Public Safety Act (PSA).

Meanwhile, there are allegations that Gangachara police did not arrest the main culprits,

although the court issued warrant of arrest order and attachment of their property. All the accused persons are now absconding, local people said.

The victims are very much worried observing the indifferent attitude of police. They are suspicious about their punishment.



Land grabbing: Some damaged houses of landless settlers. -Star photo

## Operations suspended in Barisal SBMCH

BARISAL, July 18: Routine surgical operations in Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital remained suspended from Saturday due to shortage of anesthesia specialists, reports UNB.

Out of six posts, only two anesthetists are now working and they are busy on major operations, hospital sources said.

On average, 25 routine operations are needed to be done in the hospital each day. Hospital Director Dr Shah Alam said routine operations of the admitted patients could not be conducted since Saturday.

The hospital has scarcity of anesthetists for a long time, but the crisis began when three anesthetist sent on leave on Saturday for higher study. The other three posts had remained vacant for over six months.

Authorities said the hospital actually needed 15 anesthetists. "We urged the higher authorities to increase the posts to 15, but the authorities did not pay any heed to the proposal," they alleged.

A source at the hospital director's office preferring anonymity informed that in the last 15 days they had sent two fax messages

apprising the authorities in Dhaka of the critical situation. "But we are yet to receive any response in this regard," he said.

BSS from Brahmanbaria says: Akhaura Upazila Health Complex is now facing with multifarious problems including inadequacies of medicine and lack of doctors.

The dilapidated 31-bed health complex in Akhaura was now being run with only three doctors instead of required nine having no operation theatre, ambulance or necessary facilities for emergency treatment.

The patients coming from far flung areas with high hopes here for better treatment have to go back with despair seeing no arrangement for oxygen, sacker machine, radiologist and also medicine. The problems also include inadequate number of beds and nurses.

The two health sub-centres at Mogra and Ranikhor under the upazila have also been left with only 19 health assistants instead of designated 40. Aggrieved people have complained that the doctors usually take fee from the patients coming to these health complexes and are giving more time to their private practice than

to the patients coming to these health centres every day.

The internal atmosphere of all these health centres is dirty with bad smell due to improper sanitation in and around as well as inadequate lighting arrangement. Moreover, the patients have been supplied with low quality rice and curry while many of them have to buy their food from outside.

The Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer, Dr. Noor Mohammad, told that he was expecting a new ambulance for the health complex in Akhaura very soon. But he brushed aside the allegations against the doctors of the health complex.

### Hartal in Rangpur

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, July 18: All shops in Rangpur town and adjacent places observed half-day hartal to mourn the death of a bus mishap victims.

They were killed in the mishap on Rangpur-Dhaka highway in Sirajganj on Thursday. The hartal was called by the Shopowners' Samity, Rangpur

## 154 murders in S-W dists in six months

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, July 18: At least 154 people, including eight women, were murdered in ten southwestern districts during the last six months.

Besides, at least 878 unnatural deaths, 79 rapes and 298 robberies were reported in the districts during the period from January to June this year, police sources said.

According to month-wise break-up, 25 people were murdered in January, 16 in February, 32 in March, 21 in April, 32 in May and 28 in June.

Among the ten districts highest 39 people were murdered in Jessore and lowest six in Meherpur during the period. Besides, 25 murdered in Khulna, 12 in Bagerhat, 15 in Satkhira, 12 in Narail, 16 in Jhenidah, seven in Magura and 11 each in Chuadanga and Kushtia.

Besides, 298 people were killed in road accidents and 193 committed suicide in the districts.

About 500 incidents of muggings were reported in various places of the districts during the period.

Local people said law and order improved in the districts after activists of outlawed parties and terrorists surrendered when the government declared amnesty

## 30 new pipe guns found in Gournadi

BARISAL, July 18: Police recovered 30 new pipe guns from a pond of Gobardhan village in Gournadi upazila here on Monday while searching for the arms looted from Dattapara police camp, reports UNB.

Armed men looted all the 19 rifles of Dattapara police camp in Shibchar upazila of Madaripur district recently killing a constable.

Police arrested Shahid Majhi from Fakirpool in Dhaka in connection with the looting a few days back.

According to his confessional statement, police have been conducting massive search for the last three days at the house of Milon Sarder and adjoining areas of his house at Gobardhan village.

At one stage of the search, police recovered pipe guns from the pond of Halim Sarder, a neighbour of Milon Sarder.

Police failed to arrest Badsha, son of Halim Sarder, who is allegedly an accomplice of Milon Sarder. Halim Sarder was arrested for interrogation.

Earlier, on Sunday police arrested Alamgir in connection with the arms looting.

Meanwhile, at least 20 people were injured, three by bullets, in a fierce gunfight between the activists of ruling Awami League and its student front Chhatra League in Rupatala area in Sagardi of the town on Monday.

Police and witnesses said the trouble continued for 45 minutes where 100 rounds were shot.

## Mohasthan development scheme



Work on the development of the Mazar Complex of Hazrat Shah Sultan Mahe Sawar Balkhi (R) in Mohasthan in Bogra district, is progressing fast at a cost of over Tk 6 crore. Managing Committee of the Mazar has been implementing the project with the help of the district administration and well-to-do section of the society. A master plan and design was prepared by a renowned architecture firm preserving the ancient Muslim architectural heritage and a consulting firm was also appointed paying them over Tk 27 lakh to supervise the work. The works include, raising the panoramic view of the Mazar premises, development of the Mazar mosque, Baro Mazar Sharif, Bhanderkhana (store), rest house, female rest house, toilets, sanitation, water supply and electrification, construction of sheds of the cafeteria and Khademkhana, car parking zone and setting up of a charitable dispensary. Construction works of the Mazar, Ozukhna, expansion of the mosque and water supply and sanitation will be completed within the next three months and rest of the work is likely to be completed by next four years. With the completion of the project, funded mainly by donations of the people, the missing heritage of the Mazar will be restored, committee sources said. Photo shows the attractive Mohasthangarh Museum which attracts visitors from far flung area visit here daily.

-Star photo by Akhteruzzaman Bablu