



The two thoroughfares--Dr Syed Mujtaba Ali Road (L) and the M Saifur Rahman Road -- dug at a time at Moulvibazar town.

Road digging starts as monsoon sets in

Moulvibazar has the same old tale to tell

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

Has rains awakened the authorities from slumber?

This question is now being posed by many town dwellers as the two main thoroughfares in the town are virtually unusable because of random digging.

Moulvibazar municipality has simultaneously started work on development of the two main road--the M Saifur Rahman Road (central road) and Dr Syed Mujtaba Ali Road (old hospital road).

Sources said the projects were

approved in the last financial year and the work was scheduled to begin in March. But it began a few weeks ago.

This is not only causing sufferings to the people but also affecting business and movement of inter-district vehicular traffic, many people including businessmen and transport owners said.

All the big markets in the town and inter-district bus stands are on the two roads. The affected residents expressed annoyance because of what they alleged very slow progress in work.

The municipal authorities, when

contacted, said they are implementing 75 projects for development of roads, footpaths and culverts etc.

For this, they have closed Syed Mujtaba Ali Road for vehicular traffic. The Saifur Rahman Road is open for traffic but it is virtually unusable even by rickshaw as it has been dug at so many points and construction materials piled up on it.

The situation turns worse after a mild shower, when it becomes difficult even for pedestrians.

However, Moulvibazar Pourashava Chairman Fayzul Karim said the two roads are not closed for vehicular traffic though

development work is continuing. He refuted the allegation of slow pace in work. The work is going on as scheduled, he said.

The work is scheduled to be completed by December.

But it was gathered that the work will continue much beyond the deadline as most of the electric and telephone poles are on the roads, which have to be relocated.

A little suffering is unavoidable for development, Karim said seeking cooperation of the town dwellers to complete the work.

Extortion: LGED invites fresh tender

OUR CORRESPONDENT,*Rangamati*

Extortion has posed an obstacle to development work in Rangamati.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has invited fresh tenders following surrender of work by contractors in face of threats by armed extortionists belonging to both the anti-peace accord United Peoples' Democratic Front (UPDF) and the pro-peace accord Parbatyya Chattagram Jono Sangahaty Samity (PCJSS).

Selected contractors were given work order for road repairing in Naniarchar and Borkol upazilas and construction work of bridge and culvert in Baghaichhari upazila.

'Previously we had to pay illegal toll to Shantibahini only, but after the peace deal we have to pay both the anti-peace and pro-peace parties,' a contractor told this correspondent on condition of anonymity.

However, the district officials in the LGED including the assistant engineer declined to comment on rising extortion. When asked by this correspondent, the officials of CHT Development Board, Department of Education Engineering and Hill District Council also declined to make any comment.

Once a sleepy village now abuzz with activity

A garments factory in Netrakona makes poor women self-reliant

JAHANGIR ALAM, *Netrakona*

Amana Begum, 30, wife of a rickshawpuller, now works in a garments factory in a village and earns Tk 100 to Tk 150 a day.

"I can now maintain my family and will send my two sons and the daughter to school again", she said happily while talking to this corre-

spondent on Saturday.

The factory at Madni village in the Sadar upazila has been set up by 'Netrakona Integrated Development Project' (NIDP), a local NGO.

The once sleepy village is now buzzing with activity.

A garments factory has changed the village, which was beyond our

imagination, she said.

"This has opened up great opportunities for us", echoed Rahima Khatun, 25, who was working on her sewing machine sitting beside. She is also from Madni village. Rahima's husband is physically challenged and can not work.

Rahima worked as a domestic help earlier.

They are among 60 poor women who are now trying to change their life with the facility offered by NIDP.

They produce all types of garments and supply those to markets in Netrakona district and beyond.

The factory was opened on July 13.

NIDP provides a sewing machine to each women, supplies fabrics and also market the products.

NIDP Project Director Gopal Karmakar said the factory has been opened to create employment for poor women in Netrakona sadar upazial. Before starting the project, NIDO instructors gave them six months' training on garments making, along with subsistence allowance during the training period.

"We hope 90 per cent of these 60 women will be self-reliant by working in the factory" Gopal Karmakar said.

This correspondent talked with at least 10 women at the factory. They said the factory has created new hopes for them.

NIDP Planning Manager Abu Hanif they have a plan to establish 10 to 12 garments factories in different upazilas of the district in near future.

Abu Hanif said unemployed women have go to Dhaka for jobs in garments factories or to work as domestic help. This situation will change gradually when more such factories will be set up in rural areas.



PHOTO: STAR

Women workers at the NIDP garments factory at Madni village in Netrakona Sadar upazila.

Take action against Niko

The Daily Star Readers' Club demand at Tangail

A CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

The Daily Star Readers' Club, Tangail, brought out a procession and held a rally at Tangail town on Saturday, demanding steps against Niko for the blowout in the Tengratila gas filed in Sumanganj.

With the Club's Advisor Mirza Shakil in the chair, the rally held on the Shaheed Minar premises was addressed by, among others, Babu Bishwanath Saha, Kabir Hossain Babu, Shaheen Ahmed, Ronald Sardar, Gopal Karmakar, Khalilur

Rahman, Rafiqul Islam Badal, Billu Ahmed and Sanjib Saha.

They held the Niko for the blow-out and burning of gas and demanded compensation for the affected people and the loss to the nation.

Speakers at the rally alleged that some powerful quarters in the government are backing Niko although its "negligence and inefficiency" have caused the disaster. They should be exposed and punished, they demanded.



PHOTO: STAR

The Daily Star Readers Club, Tangail, brought out a procession, followed by a rally on the Shaheed Minar Premises in the town on Saturday, demanding steps against Niko.

Jamaat will eat up BNP, says Ahab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh (Ahab) leaders at a rally at Kalaroa high school ground Saturday evening alleged that BNP-Jamaat government is bringing up "terrorists" under state protection.

They blamed the Jamaat-e-Islami, a key partner in the ruling four-party alliance, for arrest of four Ahab leaders including its chief Asadullah Al Galib.

This has been done to hide Jamaat's politics based on fundamentalism and acts of violence in the name of religion, they alleged.

Ahab leaders also threatened the ruling BNP-Jamaat alliance 'to teach a good lesson' in next general election if the alleged repression on Ahab is not stopped.

"Election victory of the two major parties (BNP-Jamat) in many constituencies including those in Satkhira district depends on our support. We will teach them a lesson if our leaders are not freed and repression is not stopped," Ahab's Acting Ameer Dr Muslehuddin Ahmed said at the rally.

"We read in news papers presence of Bangla Bhai but police are not arresting him. Police can easily nab him if houses of some ministers are searched," he said.

Ahab central Advisor Prof Nazrul Islam chaired the rally, also addressed by Prof Rafiqul Islam, Principal Azizur Rahman, Abdul Wadood, Jahangir Alam, Abdul Mannan, Fazlur Rahman and Altaf Hossain.

Ahab leaders said Jamat-Shibir are gaining ground under the shelter of BNP. They (Jamaat-Shibir) will soon eat up BNP, the speakers said.

Rejoinder

The Public Relations office of Rajshahi University in a rejoinder yesterday termed 'partly untrue' a report published in The Daily Star on June 27 under the headline 'Agitation in front of RU VC office.'

It said a few employees met and discussed issues of their employment after the high court upheld a lower court verdict that stayed their appointments.

Our Reply: Our report was filed after closely monitoring the events from the spot and quoting witnesses. The agitating employees scuffled with police as they forcibly tried to enter into the administrative building. Later, a few leaders among the agitators were allowed to call on the RU vice-chancellor. We stand by our report.

Feud in Satkhira BNP over new committee

Leaders summoned to Dhaka for meeting today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

The intra-party feud in Satkhira BNP has intensified as differences among front ranking leaders over formation of a new district committee has widened.

Top leaders at district and upazila levels have been summoned by the party high command for a meeting in Dhaka today to mend the feud.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary Tarique Rahman is likely to preside over the meeting, scheduled to be held at the Hawa Bhaban, party sources told this correspondent yesterday.

They have been summoned as the deadline set by the party high command to form a full fledged new committee expired long ago, the sources said. Presidents and secretaries of all upazila committees will also attend the Dhaka meeting.

The sources said district BNP President Habibur Islam Habib

MP and General Secretary Rahmatullah Palash were asked on June 23 to form a full-fledged committee by June 23. But it could not be formed.

Ahead of the Dhaka meeting, the faction led by Habibur Islam Habib held a party meeting yesterday at Satkhira district BNP office with district Krishak Dal President Mohammad Ali in the chair.

It was addressed by, among others, Habibur Islam Habib, former district BNP secretary and Public Prosecutor (PP) Syed Iftekhar Ali and Advocate Samsuzzoha Bafu. The meeting adopted a proposal to form a new district committee headed by Habibur Islam Habib and Samsuzzoha Bablu as president and general secretary respectively.

The proposal is expected to be placed at today's meeting at Hawa Bhaban, the sources said.

On the other hand,

Rahmatullah Palash says there is no conflict between him and Habibur Islam regarding organisational matters.

But he told this correspondent, "If they (Habib and Iftekhar) placed a new committee at the meeting, we will also place a new committee to be headed by Abdur Rouf, Rahmatullah Palash and Abdul Alim as president, general secretary and organising secretary".

The BNP high command on June 9 last year dissolved the committee headed by Abdul Jalil and Syed Iftekhar Ali and formed a committee headed by Habibur Islam Habib and Abdul Jalil, asking them to form a full fledged committee within three months.

But the committee could not be formed in one year allegedly due to internal feud.

This has created frustration in the rank and file in Stakhira BNP, party sources said.

NEW LAND AND HOLDING TAXES

HC rule on Rangpur municipality

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangpur*

The High Court has issued a rule nisi on the Rangpur municipality for its new assessment for taxes on lands and holdings.

The court also stayed realisation of new taxes for six months from June 25. It also called upon the respondents to show cause within four weeks why the re-valuation list of lands and buildings, made in violation of rules 23, 24, 25 and 40 of the Municipal Committee (Taxation) Rules 1960, and imposition of 'discriminatory and exorbitant' municipal tax should not be declared to have been made without lawful authority and unconstitutional.

The municipal authorities'

action violated the petitioner's fundamental rights, guaranteed by Article 27, 31 and 42 of the Constitution, the HC order said. The rule nisi followed a petition by Anwar Hossain, representative of the Committee for Prevention of Imposition of Excessive Municipal Tax, and two residents --- Anwar Ali and Khadija Rahman.

Meanwhile, the committee held a press conference yesterday on the office premises of Samo Samaj Ganatantri Party and urged the town dwellers to refrain from paying taxes as per the new assessment.

Mohammed Afzal, convener of the committee, alleged that the Rangpur municipal authorities

unlawfully enhancedmunicipal tax on lands and holdings in the municipal area.

He also claimed that the 'faulty and discriminatory' tax assessment would be a huge burden on residents.

"It is about 30 to 50 per cent higher than the previous rate," the former Chairman of Rangpur Municipality and President of Samo Samaj Ganatantri Party claimed.

When contacted, Rangpur Municipality chairman Abdur Rouf Manik said, he is yet to get the HC order and refused to comment on it. He however said the municipal authorities did not do anything unlawful.

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