

Thousands suffer for want of bridge in Khagrachhari

LGED project to build bridge over the Chenghi in 2005-06 financial year fails to take off for unknown reason

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Around 50,000 indigenous people of 28 villages are suffering just for want of a bridge over the Chenghi river at Vibonchhara-Kongchhari point under Sadar upazila.

The farmers and other residents also suffer financially as they often can not sell their products.

Besides, the government is also making loss at its 2,553 acres of Zugol Chhari reserve forest due to lack of proper care taking, monitoring, visiting for planned activities. So, the reserve forest is disappearing fast.

At least 4 thousand school and college students can not join classes during rainy season.

Just for a bridge, some hundred school children can not come to district headquarters for better education, while the villagers remain deprived of essentials and other commodities.

During a visit to Choto Para, Nalchhara, Muguli, Mohan Para, Bambu Para, Heladula Para, Kathal Bari, Hatim Para and Kongchhari Para and four government and non-government primary schools, the students and their guardians claimed teachers do not come to those areas during the rainy season as all of them reside at Khagrachhari district town.

Nomrita Tripura, a class seven student told the Daily Star that her study is badly hampered during rainy season. 'Our parents do not allow us to go to school as there is no bridge, she said.



PHOTO: STAR

Rural school students wade through the Chenghi to attend classes in schools situated in Khagrachhari town.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Development Project (CHRD) carried out survey several times to build a bridge but for mysterious reasons the project remained shelved.

'We can't even send the serious patients to the district or upazila level health complex to save their lives', lamented Mongshiprue Marama.

Mongshi, president of Vibonchhara Millennium High

School, resented, 'We are deprived of all sorts of basic rights as we are poor and helpless indigenous citizens'. The government is neither serious nor sympathetic about our problems, he added.

A bridge over the Chenghi is a longstanding demand of indigenous people. We want its immediate implementation, he said.

Vibonchhara Union Parishad chairman Aprushi Marma said they

were thinking since 1991 to build a bridge over the Chenghi but failed to do it for lack of funds. Then they requested the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) to take up the project.

Project was okayed in 2005-2006 financial year. But it failed to take off for unknown reasons, he added.

'We demand construction of a bridge over the Chenghi as early as possible,' he said.

3-day Ekushey fair in 2 dists

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Two fairs began in Manikganj and Khagrachhari to mark the International Mother Language Day yesterday.

Our Manikganj Correspondent reports: A three-day Ekushey Fair began at Shaheed Rafique's house at Paril village under Singair upazila.

Various programmes were chalked out to mark the occasion. The programmes include cultural function, art competition, blood donation and discussion at Rafique Mancha. The fair will conclude on Thursday.

Earlier, people from all walks of life paid homage to language martyrs.

Our Khagrachhari Correspondent reports: A three-day book fair began at the Officers' Club in the hill town under the auspices of the district administration.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Shahadat Hossain formally inaugurated the fair at 10-30 am.

43 'criminals' arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police in separate drives conducted in different parts of the district yesterday and Tuesday night arrested 43 alleged criminals and recovered fire arms.

Acting on a tip-off, the Rab personnel arrested Abdul Hakim and recovered two locally made pipe-guns conducting raids at his house at Hazipara under Gangachara upazila Tuesday night.

On interrogation, Hakim disclosed names of his associates. Accordingly, Rab arrested Belal Hossain and Saiful Islam from Mahiganj area in Rangpur town.

Police as part of their ongoing drive arrested 40 alleged criminals from different parts of the district during the last 24 hours.

New home for elderly people in Monga-prone Lalmonirhat

Ten distressed elderly people accommodated initially

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A new home for elderly people named 'Rebecca-Reyaz Probin Nibash' has been established at Aditmari Upazila in Lalmonirhat district.

The home was formally opened at a simple but impressive function on January 3 this year.

Sons and daughters of late Rebecca Reyaz, a housewife who dedicated her entire life for the welfare of children and Alhaj Reyaz Uddin Ahmed, a renowned lawyer and social worker in Rangpur town, established the home in memory of their parents at the place of birth of their celebrated father.

It was established on the land of their late father. The expenditure for development of land and construction of the building was borne by the family members of late Reyaz.

The home accommodates five elderly women and five elderly men who faced extreme hardship in their life time or who has none to look after.

The activity of the home started on December 25 last year. Earlier, 110 poor fasting men and women daily during the holy month of

Ramadan. One hundred children were also fed during the period.

On contact, Lt Col (Retd) Fayeze Bahar, youngest son of late Rebecca Reyaz and late Alhaj Reyaz Uddin Ahmed, said the home was established as a mark of gratitude to our parents

who did a life long struggle to rear up by imparting proper educate and establishing us to a respectable position in society. We invite journalists and others to visit the home and come up with valuable suggestions, Bahar added.



PHOTO: STAR

Elderly residents pose for photograph in front of their new home at Rebecca-Reyaz Probin Nibash in Lalmonirhat.

3X2

Ahsania Mission brings hope to drug addicts

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Nurul Islam, a resident of Moulvibazar was barely 27 when he started taking illegal drug to counter fatigue. Now at the age of 32, he is a broken man who has lost his job as well as respectability in society.

Struck by poverty, even his close relatives shun him. But now Dhaka Ahsania Mission Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre set up at Rajendrapur in Gazipur district in 2004 to help drug addicts to get rid of their addiction, has brought hope to this former truck driver. Having given up drugs for the past five months with the assistance of the DAM team, Nurul Islam is now recuperating in the rehabilitation centre.

Nurul Islam worked with one of the leading transport companies in the area. He was considered a good truck driver during his youth. He used to load his vehicle with lemon and pineapple from remote areas of Moulvibazar and deliver the consignments in time in the capital and other parts of the country. At times his employer used to reward him for his good work. During night journey, Nurul Islam could sleep hardly for two to three hours. This driving made Nurul Islam a drug addict. He went on increasing the dose day after day.

Nurul Islam had no idea of what

harm the drug was doing to him till his employer threw him out of his job and said he was no longer useful for the company. Nurul Islam's eldest son is also a truck driver, but he realises that drug consumption has done much harm to the financial and social status of their family. After getting cured, Nurul Islam plans to marry off his 24-year-old daughter who could not be married earlier due to his addiction.

Nurul Islam's is not an isolated case of people taking drugs for one reason or the other. Abul Kalam and Tapan, two drug addict college students and hailing from Noakhali and Comilla also vowed not to consume drugs again. The efforts of Dhaka Ahsania Mission have succeeded in dissuading them and some other residents of different districts from the suicidal path of

drug addiction.

An estimated five million people in the country, most of them young people, are drug users.

DAM president and chief executive Kazi Rafiqul Alam said the ultimate effect of drugs and HIV/AIDS is death. The younger generation of our society is increasingly indulging in this death trap. Considering the alarming situation, DAM took up its drug prevention programme known as AMIK as back as 1990. DAM has a plan to build more drug treatment and rehabilitation centres in all other parts of the country.

Expressing great concern over the alarming rate of drug addiction prevailing among street children, Alam stressed on a social movement to uproot the vice once for all from society.



PHOTO: STAR

Patients share their experiences with fellow inmates at a regular session held at DAM Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre in Gazipur.

9X2

6x3

12x3