

New courses of frontier rivers changing Bangladesh map

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh's geographic map is gradually changing with the change of course by frontier rivers for intervention in natural flow of waters.

In changing course over the years the rivers devour landmass, resulting in the squeezing of the overcrowded country's limited territory.

Bangladesh has 300 kilometers of riverine border with India. So far, some 30,000 acres of land of Bangladesh are learnt to have drifted towards the Indian side following erosion of the riverbanks.

"Bangladesh has been losing its land as border rivers Surma and Kushiara in Sylhet continue to change their directions, shifting from the original borderline, owing to erosion," an official of the Water Development Board said.

The two rivers, having their origins in Barak River in the north-eastern India, have shifted from their original borderlines and now run inside the Bangladesh territory, which results in loss of thousands of acres of land in Sylhet.

Around 3,000 acres of land went to Indian possession following

erosion by the Surma and Kushiara rivers only, official sources said. Local people, however, said that the loss of land alongside the two rivers is about 5,000 acres.

As a result, the country's map is changing with the change of direction of border rivers, swallowing the land of Bangladesh to add to the Indian territories. According to the Mujib-Indira Border Treaty, signed between India and Bangladesh in 1974, the borderline passes through midstream of the common rivers.

Due to erosion by the Kushiara and changes in its direction, 914 acres of land in Majorgaon, Amalshid, Lakkhizabur, Sultapur, Senapatiachak and Manikpur areas have now become part of India. On the other hand, 250 acres of land in Vallah, Uttarkul, Munshibazar and Dighli areas on the bank of Surma have been engulfed by the river.

Bangladesh's landmass in Sylhet is facing erosion as the flows of the river Surma and Kushiara are being changed due to construction of dams at Tipaimukh on the Barak river in the upstream, around 100 km off the border, to generate hydroelectricity.

While visiting Amalshid point under Jakiganj upazila in Sylhet, where the Barak waters from India fall into the twin rivers Surma and Kushiara, a group of reporters from Dhaka found no water flow through the Surma while the flow in the other was also scanty.

There were 13 vulnerable points on the Kushiara and four on the Surma which need immediate revetment work to save the rivers from continuous erosion, said an official.

Sirajuddin, 60, a farmer of

River erosion continues in the border areas as embankments of most of the rivers on Bangladesh side remain unprotected while dams and groins have been constructed at different points upstream in India. As such, the rivers change their directions breaking the banks inside Bangladesh, according to experts.

Bangladesh that had been totally devoured by the river. Local people said some 20 to 25 families have so far lost their lands due to river erosion but never got those back.

A senior official of the Water Development Board in Sylhet told reporters that the Board has taken up a project to protect the bank of Kushiara from Haiderabad to Bhuiyan Mora point on an emergency basis, "but the project has not been approved yet".

The official said if Bangladesh fails to take protection measures timely, the country would lose more lands in the coming rainy season as the rivers are silting up for diversion in their flows and losing the capacity to contain and drive down volumes of rainwater.

FORCED HILLA MARRIAGE

HC issues rule on govt

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued rule upon the government to explain why direction should not be given to take legal actions against the offenders for compelling hilla marriage in violation of the Muslim Family Law Ordinance.

It also issued rule asking the government to explain why it should not be directed to stop such "unlawful acts by the fatwa issuing clerics."

The court rule came following a public-interest litigation writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), a rights body.

Citing a report published in a daily newspaper on May 1, the petitioner submitted that a section of clerics in Dashtika village of Bogra district have been issuing fatwa, compelling people to get hilla married in violation of the rules of existing Muslim Law.

If a couple separates through instant divorce by the husband and then they want to resettle, the estranged wife is wedded perforce to a second man in such a token (hilla) marriage.

"Such acts are not only violative of the existing law of the land but also the Constitution," the petitioner told the court, seeking a remedy.

The rule is returnable in six weeks. Advocate Manzill Murshid, also HRPB president, moved the petition.

The court ordered Kanaighat OC on the same day for taking necessary action after investigating the matter.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed speaks at a view exchange meeting with the editors of the national dailies and heads of the television channels at his office in the city yesterday.

EXTORTION CASE

Probe against Jamaat leader Mujahid, five others begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, SYLHET

Police yesterday started investigation of extortion case against Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Md Mujahid, former Jamaat lawmaker from Sylhet 5 (Zakiganj and Kanaihat) Moulana Farid Uddin Chowdhury and four others.

A police official said the case records reached Kanaighat Police Station on Saturday night.

Additional Police Super (North) Amir Zafar along with Investigation Officer and Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kanaighat Police Station have visited Kandla Noyabazar in connection with case.

One Abdullah of Kanaighat filed the case with Sylhet Cognizance Magistrate's Court-II on May 3.

The complainant alleged that one local Jamaat leader Main Uddin took Tk 5 lakh from him with the false assurance of saving Kandla Noyabazar from the erosion of Lova river with the help of Farid Uddin Chowdhury and Ali Ahsan Md Mujahid.

The court ordered Kanaighat OC on the same day for taking necessary action after investigating the matter.

As the trader, whose name police did not disclose for the sake of investigation, continued to threaten

RMG factory executive gunned down in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants gunned down an executive of a garment factory in city's Mirpur area yesterday.

Witnesses said four criminals waylaid Salahuddin Chowdhury alias Sona Mian, 40, production manager (PM) of REX Composite Knitwear Limited, on the road near Proshika Office at 9:40am when he was going to his office in Mirpur Section 6 by a rickshaw.

The assailants first stabbed him twice in the head and chest and then shot once in the chest leaving Salahuddin dead on the spot.

Hearing a gunshot I looked on the road and saw some people rushing towards the scene. I also rushed there and saw a man lying in a pool of blood," said Jahangir Alam, owner of a scrap metal shop, around 50 yards of the scene.

Police suspected that Salahuddin might have been killed as a sequel to an enmity with two jhut (garment by-products) traders.

Officer-in-Charge of Pallabi Police Station Abdur Rashid said Salahuddin had been supplying jhut to a local man for the last few years, but he stopped giving him the garment by-products a few months back that angered the trader.

As the trader, whose name police did not disclose for the sake of investigation, continued to threaten

STATE OF EMERGENCY
Comments represent views of 14 Euro MPs
Says EU spokesperson

UNB, Dhaka

The European Commission is fully aware of the remarks made by several members of the European Parliament, which constitute a "further perspective" on Bangladesh's present circumstances, said a spokesperson for the EU Delegation in Dhaka yesterday.

Clairifying the European Commission's position, the spokesperson noted that these comments represent the views of the parliamentarians concerned.

In a joint statement on Friday, 14 members of the European Parliament urged the caretaker government to immediately lift the state of emergency for the sake of democracy and ensure security of the parliamentarians concerned.

Police could not arrest anyone as of 8:00pm last night though the victim's son Aminul Islam alleged that a gang might have been involved in his father's killing.

Aminul said one Babu went to their Shah Ali Bagh house near Mirpur Section 1 at around 8:30am and asked his father to come out with a plea to say him something. But, my father did not come out, he added.

"After half an hour he accompanied me to a local laundry and then he took a rickshaw for his office," Aminul told reporters at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the body was taken for autopsy.

He said as soon as his father's rickshaw left the place, Babu and three others in two rickshaws left the area.

Aminul also said his father used to go to office in a private car, but yesterday he preferred to go by rickshaw due to some apprehension.



Ahsanullah
Master's death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the third death anniversary of slain Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master.

Ahsanullah Master, a lawmaker from Gazipur-2 constituency and Sramik League leader, was shot dead when a gang of about 20 gunmen sprayed bullets on the rally of Bangladesh's Awami League at a school compound near his residence in Tongi on this day in 2004.

A Dhaka court sentenced 22 people to death and six others life term for the murder on April 16 in 2005.

Of the accused, 14 are in jail and rest are still at large.

On the occasion, family members have taken different programmes, including milad, doa mahfil and public feast to mark the day.

Shaheed Ahsanullah Master Smriti Sangsad, Hyderbad Janakalyan Samity, Bhawali Shishu Kishore Mela and Bhawali Ideal Academy have also chalked out elaborate programmes at Tangi and Gazipur marking the day.

The programmes include placing of wreaths at his grave at his home village Hyderbad, milad, doa mahfil, distribution of foods among the poor, memorial meeting at the Noogaon Majid Mian High School ground and children's art competition at Bhawan Ideal Academy.

Besides, Shaheed Ahsanullah Master Smriti Sangsad will organise a discussion titled "The role of an honest politician for building a terrorism-free society."

Makbul Hasan Moni

Today is the 26th death anniversary of Makbul Hasan Moni, a Dhaka University Blue in football and cricket, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwan and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at Bakshi Bazar at 6:30pm today.

Members of his family and Makbul Hasan Trust, friends and admirers will offer fataha at his grave at Azimpur.

Workshop on letter grading, semester system held at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Faculty of Arts of Dhaka University (DU) organised a workshop on 'Guidelines for Letter Grading and Semester System' at the Senate Building auditorium on the campus yesterday.

The seminar was held in line with the plan to introduce uniform grading and semester system in all faculties and institutes of the university from the 2006-2007 sessions.

Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz formally inaugurated the daylong workshop, where Pro-VC Prof AFM Yusuf Haider, National University VC Prof Waqil Ahmed and Faculty of Social Sciences Dean Prof Dr Harun-or-Rashid were present. Arts Faculty Dean Prof Sadruddin Amin presided over the workshop.

Prof Niaz Maman, Prof Sharif Ullah Bhuiyan and Prof Azizun Nahar Islam also spoke on the occasion.

Sources said the authorities decided to introduce the semester system and publish the results under the letter grading system last year but did not implement the plan for lack of operational support.

Later on February 18, authorities made a decision in an academic council meeting to introduce the system from the current session.

Prof Amin said this workshop is intended to give basic guidelines to the teachers on the new system.

Earlier, departments of population science, women's studies and development studies introduced the system along with the Faculty of Business Studies and Institute of Business Administration.

3 children hurt in Munshiganj bomb blast

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Three children were injured following a bomb blast in Munshiganj yesterday.

The injured Hashem Dewan, 10, Hossen Dewan, 9, and Aminul, 11, were admitted to a local hospital.

While playing, the children found two ball-like objects wrapped with red tape. Out of curiosity, when they started playing with them, one of the balls blasted leaving the three injured.

Deputy officer of Munshiganj Police Station admitted the incident.

One killed, 30 injured in Aminbazar road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least one person was killed and 30 others were injured when a passenger bus turned upside down and fell into an around 30 feet-deep ditch near Aminbazar in Savar on Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday.

The accident occurred when the driver desperately tried to save a rickshaw that took a sudden turn to cross the road at Salehpur Bridge at 10:45am.

The Dhaka-bound bus from Natore was partly twisted.

Locals rushed to the spot and help the people came out of the bus whose glasses got smashed.

Heleluddin, 20, helper of the bus, succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital. Four of the injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Our CU correspondent adds: Two people were killed in two separate road accidents in the port city yesterday.

Police seized the bus while its driver managed to flee.

In another incident, the unidentified person was killed on city's Dewanhat Bridge under Kotowali Police Station when a city bus knocked him at around 12:45pm.

Police seized the bus.

Fatema, a young housewife of 20, has been suffering from kidney disease for the last two years, says a press release.

Hers two kidneys have been damaged and the doctors have suggested kidney transplantation for her treatment which needs a huge amount of money.

Fatema is now undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) with the support of a voluntary organisation Nure Sufia Foundation.

Poor father and husband of Fatema are unable to bear her treatment cost.

They have appealed for financial assistance from the affluent section of the society to save the life of Fatema.

Contributions can be sent to Mohammad Alamgir Hossain, Savings Account No 72505, Pubali Bank Limited, Dhaka Stadium Branch, Dhaka-1000.

Rab arrested another person named Mohammad Shuruj Miah, 45, in this connection.

Rab nabs 3 fake BRTA license manufacturers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested three members of a gang of manufacturers of fake BRTA (Bangladesh Road Transport Authority) licenses in the city on Saturday evening.

The arrestees were identified as Mohammad Rafiq Miah, son of late Chan Miah, and Mohammad Badshah Miah, son of Shukur Ali Howlader.

Acting on a tip-off, Rab members in disguise met Rafiq and Badshah who showed them samples of 40 fake licenses.

They were arrested on the spot.

Both Rafiq and Badshah had connections with them in manufacturing fake licenses.

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