

# 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, Lakshibazar, Sultanpur, Senapatichak and Manikpur areas have now become part of India. On the other hand, 250 acres of land in Vallah, Uttarkul, Munshibazar and Digli areas on the bank of Surma have been engulfed by the river.

Bangladesh initiated a move through the Joint Rivers Commission to conduct a joint study on the rivers Surma and Kushiara in 2005, but no headway was made for reported reluctance on part of the Indian authorities, said officials of the Water Development Board in Sylhet.

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'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 Borak 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

village Amalshid, told the newsmen that he lost 70 to 80 acres of land and three houses in river erosion. "Due to river erosion in Bangladesh part, chars emerge on the Indian side and Indian villagers grab those lands and cultivate with the help of Indian BSF," said many a victim, like Siraj. People of Harinagar in India occupied the lands of the village Alinagar in

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 Haidaraband to Bhuiyan Mota 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 intervention in their flows and losing the capacity to contain and drive down volumes of rainwater.



PHOTO: PID

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 law-maker from Sylhet-5 (Zakiganj and Kanaighat) 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 Nayabazar 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 Nayabazar 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.

## 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 jhuts (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.

Clarifying 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 Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina on her return home.

They appreciated the caretaker government's fight against corruption but expressed concern over what they called 'systematic repression and intimidation of political party leaders under the state of emergency'.



PHOTO: STAR

Former adviser to caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan speaks at a roundtable on 'Reform of Political Systems' organised by the daily Prothom Alo at its office yesterday. On his right are former adviser to caretaker government Sultana Kamal and Centre for Policy Dialogue Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharya and on his left are former advisers M Hafizuddin Khan and Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Md Ibrahim and Jahangirnagar University Professor Dilara Chowdhury. (Story on Page 1)

## 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 Sadrul Amin presided over the workshop.

Prof Niaz Zaman, Prof Sharif Ullah Bhuiyan and Prof Azizunnahar 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 along with the Faculty of Business Studies and Institute of Business Administration.

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.

Duty 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.

One of the deceased was identified as Abdul Haque, 52, of Shikalbaha area under Patiya upazila in the district while identity of another could not be known.

The first accident occurred when a Chittagong city-bound bus from Satkania upazila knocked a rickshaw that was carrying Abdul Haque from behind near Shah Amanat Bridge under Karnaphuli Police Station at around 11:30am, source said.

Haque received severe injuries and was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

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.

## 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.

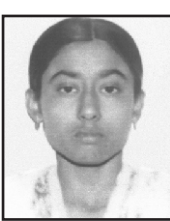
Citing a report published in a daily newspaper on May 1, the petitioner submitted that a section of clerics in Dashedika village of Bogra district have been issuing fatwa, compelling people to get hilla married in violation of the rules of existing Muslim Law.

If a couple separates through instant divorce by the husband and then they want to settle, 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.

## Appeal for help



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

Her 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.

So 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.

## DEATH OF CHALESH RISIL

### Formation of probe body hailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different rights organisations yesterday hailed the government for forming a judicial probe commission to investigate the unnatural death of Chalesh Risil.

The indigenous leader died at the custody of the law enforcers.

Executive Director of Blast Toslimur Rahman, Sultana Kamal of Ain O Salish Kendra, Shamsul Huda of Association for Land Reform and Development, Syeda Rizwana Hasan of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) and Coordinator of Nijera Kori Khushi Kabir in a statement expressed their willingness to cooperate with the government in this regard.



PHOTO: STAR

BNP leaders Amanullah Aman and Mir Nasiruddin and the latter's son Mir Helaluddin, left, and Awami League leader Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, right, are being taken to the Metropolitan Session's Judge's Court in the city yesterday.

## Rab nabs 3 fake BRTA license manufacturers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-4) 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 Howladar.

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 disclosed that some BRTA men had connections with them in manufacturing fake licenses.

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

## DHAKA TODAY

### Discussion

International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) organises a pre-budget discussion. Venue: Brac Centre Inn auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

### Art exhibition

An art exhibition, displaying the pictures drawn by 30 eminent artists of the country on the occasion of the Independence Day, will begin. Venue: Liberation War Museum. Time: 5:00pm. The exhibition will run till May 20 from 10:00am to 8:00pm.

### Lecture

Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh organises a memorial lecture titled 'Upholding the engineering profession' to pay tribute to four eminent engineers. Venue: IEB seminar room. Time: 5:30pm.

## UN fails to adequately address issues of poverty: Shafi Sami

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former adviser to the caretaker government CM Shafi Sami yesterday said that the United Nations (UN) is failing to adequately address the issues related to poverty because of its projects' lack of focus on the results, operational ineffectiveness, incoherence in the policies and duplication of its various agencies' works.

Inefficient and ineffective governance exacerbated by unpredictable and inadequate funds also contributed to such failures, he said at the Syed Abul Hossain Memorial Lecture-2007 organised by United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) at the city's Cirdap auditorium.

"The world faces an all pervading poverty with 40 percent of the world's population surviving on less than two US dollars a day and approximately 50,000 people dying each day as a consequence of this extreme poverty," he said while delivering the lecture on 'Securing the future of the United Nations'.

CM Shafi Sami, also former foreign secretary, said there is no security of the global basic human right to food, water, healthcare, education, energy and other resources because of the lack of universal realisation that the greatest threat to world security stem from poverty and marginalisation of the majority of the population.

"Poverty anywhere threatens peace and today's problems in the developing countries will inevitably become tomorrow's predicament for the developed world," he said.

The world is facing more critical challenges, he said, suggesting that the UN needs ambitious, bold and far-reaching reforms and reinvigoration to ensure that it rises to the occasion and delivers on its promises.

The former diplomat said it became painfully obvious that the UN power was strictly limited to the

investment and priorities of its powerful member states. Some member states sought to prop the UN as a counterweight to US hegemony, while others saw it as a means of constraining or taming Washington's unilateralist urges, he noted.

"As a consequence came the US-led military intervention in Iraq that was a jolt to the UN with heightened international anxiety about the commitment of the powerful states to uphold the principles of the UN," CM Shafi Sami added.

In the end, the prestige of both the US and UN suffered grievously, while the larger strategic and legal issues remained unresolved, he noted.

Paying tribute to founding secretary general of UNAB Syed Ahmad Hossain on his 8th death anniversary, its President Prof Salahuddin Ahmed said Ahmad Hossain was the soul and body of the organisation.

UNAB Secretary General Prof Syed Mohammad Shahed also spoke.

## Madrasa student found dead

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A madrasa student was found dead in a bush adjacent to the madrasa at Madhupur village under Sirajdikhan upazila in Munshiganj yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Abu Taher, 14, son of Hafez Abdur Rahman Miah of Gupirpara village in Sirajganj district and a student of Madhupur Halimiya Madrasa.

Taher has been missing since Saturday evening and police could not ascertain the motive behind the murder.

Sub-inspector Mahe Alam said police found marks of injuries of sharp weapon in Taher's throat.



## 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 Samik League leader, was shot dead when a gang of about 20 gunmen sprayed bullets on the rally of Bangladesh Awami Swechhasebak 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.

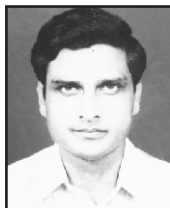
Of the accused, 14 are in jail and rest are still at large.

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, Hydarabad Janakalyan Samity, Bhawal Shishu Kishore Mela and Bhawal 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 Hydarabad, milad, doa mahfil, distribution of foods among the poor, memorial meeting at the Noagao 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, Qurankhwani 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 fateha at his grave at Azimpur.