

Tk 132cr Sylhet flood control project still uncertain

Only 15pc work done in 7 years: Plan revised thrice in 2 years

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet
Sylhet Sadar upazilas in the district
Repeated floods, water stagnation and large scale erosion along the banks of two major rivers in the region have caused huge damage to crops, households and croplands for the last several years while the WDB authorities failed to take protective works in time.

included, construction of 181-kilometre embankments, 813 irrigation structures, two bridges, five drainage regulators, 163 km irrigation canals, 56 km drainage canals and installation of four irrigation pumps.
About two years ago, the project budget was raised by 58 per cent putting the figure at Tk 181 crore, with a target to complete it by 2009-10. The programme includes acquisition of 450 hectares of land, construction and reconstruction of 159 km embankments, construction of 20 drainage cum flushing regulators and construction of a pumping station, 30 km irrigation canal, 64 km lateral canal and 122 irrigation structures, said an official of WDB.

Boy abducted for Tk 1 lakh ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Saikhira.
A 3-year boy was abducted allegedly by pirates from Purba Kalinagar village adjacent to the Sundarbans in Shyamnagar upazila Saturday night.
The abductors demanded Tk one lakh ransom for release of Pappu, son of Golok Chandra Sarkar, Shyamnagar police said.
They gave a five-day deadline for payment of the ransom, according to the victim's father.
Quoting local people, police said, a gang of pirates armed with deadly weapons entered the house of Golok Chandra at dead of night and demanded Tk one lakh as toll.
As he failed to pay, they abducted Pappu from the house at gun point.
Shyamnagar thana OC Abdur Razzak visited the spot yesterday and assured the victim's parents of a drive in the deep forest to rescue the boy.



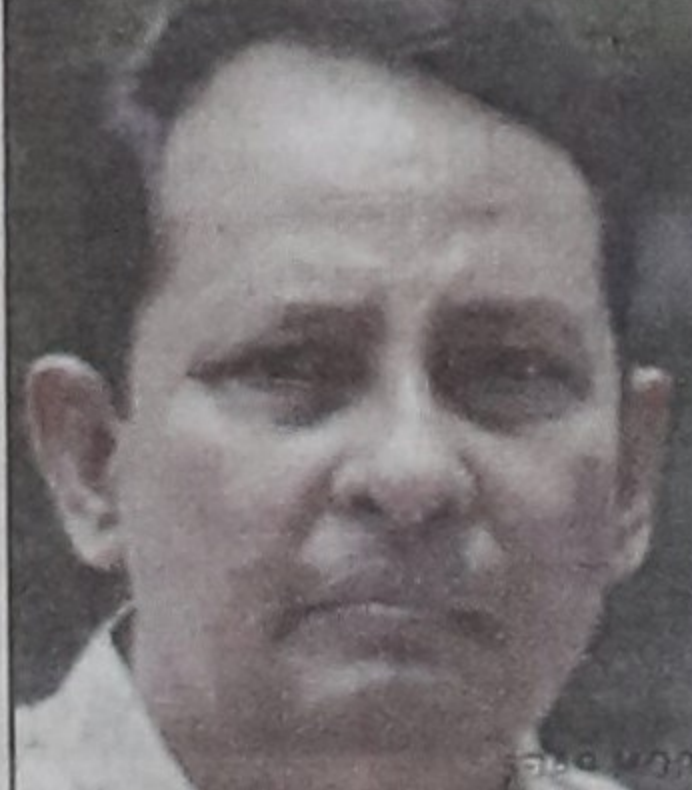
Cultural organisations form a human chain on the premises of Dinajpur Government College yesterday demanding re-installation of baul sculpture near Zia International Airport in the capital.

War criminals have no right to be in JS

Leaders of Sector Commanders Forum (SCF) yesterday said war criminals and anti-liberation forces have no right to go to parliament and urged the people to boycott them in the upcoming parliament election.
They demanded trial of war criminals to establish justice, consolidate democracy and uphold the spirit of the Liberation War. They were addressing a meeting at Santhia upazila auditorium Saturday afternoon.
SCF Chairman Air Vice Marshal (retd) AK Khondoker, Maj Gen (retd) KM Shafulullah, Lt Col (retd) Abu Usman Choudhuri, and Freedom Fighter Commander Nizam Uddin addressed the meet-

'JP to support AL in Kushtia-2 if grand alliance formed'

Jatiya Party (Ershad) Presidium member Ahsan Habib Linkon yesterday said his party will support Awami League (AL) leader Mahbulul Alam Hanif if it is a nominee of the proposed grand alliance in Kushtia-2 (Mirpur-Bheramara) constituency in the coming election.
He however said he will seek JP nomination if there is no grand alliance. Linkon bought JP nomination paper yesterday, he told this correspondent.
Once chairman of Kushtia Zila Parishad, Linkon declared his party's stance at a meeting of Mirpur upazila Awami League where he was an invited speaker.
Held at Mirpur Women College premises Saturday evening, the meeting was also addressed by Kushtia JP secretary Abdur Razzak, Mirpur JP president Khondoker Sahjanur Ali Dudu and secretary Shamsul Alam.
Without mentioning any name, Linkon said his party will support the 'candidate who is actually a man of the area and dedicated to its development'. No 'seasonal bird' will get JP support in the constituency election.
'I will extend all my support only to Mahbulul Alam Hanif if he gets nomination. JP will not support any other candidate', he said.
With Mirpur upazila AL president Rabiul Haq Rabi in the chair, the meeting was addressed by, among others, upazila AL joint secretary Saiful Alam Rana.
Linkon's remarks came at a time when AL leader Mahbulul Alam Hanif and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu is seeking nomination from AL-led proposed grand alliance in Kushtia-2 constituency.
Both are now in the field and are 'confident' of getting alliance ticket.



Tributes paid to Mong Raja Prue

Speakers at a condolence meeting held here yesterday paid rich tributes to Mong Raja Pahala Prue Chowdhury who was killed in tragic road accident at Pagarpara in Ramghor upazila on October 23.
Bangladesh Marma Sangathan Oikyo Parishad organised the meeting. Held at the office of Mong Raja, the meeting was chaired by Oikyo Parishad president Kong Chairy Marma while it was attended by Khagrachhari Hill District Council chairman Monindra Lal Tripura as chief guest.
Speakers remembered with gratitude the pioneering role of Mong king in bringing back peace in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) through signing of CHT peace accord between government and indigenous Parbotya Chattogram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) on December 2, 1997.
They said the king dedicated his life for welfare of people of Mong circle. During his rule, different tribes including Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Rakhine and Mag lived in peace and harmony.
Khagrachhari Army Region Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Qumruzzaman, Deputy Commissioner AKM Khairul Alam, Superintendent of Police Mohammad Qaimuddin Khan, Khagrachhari municipal Mayor Mohammad Joyal Abedin, Marma Sangathan Oikyo Parishad Secretary Babuushi Chowdhury addressed.
Earlier, a mourning procession was brought out from Young Buddha Bihar. Thousands of people



Pahala Prue Chowdhury from all walks of life joined the procession. The king's cremation ceremony will be held at his residence today.

Ayub Korom Ali: A new Londoni face in Sylhet politics

Courtesy, SAM Strickland
'Change' he said. 'Change is crucial.' As the sun sank in the darkening sky these words, spoken in a quiet voice, seemed poignant and urgent with the state-of-emergency and election looming.
Ayub Korom Ali, an Oxford-educated, Londoni politician, is shifting his career, family-life and home in London to contest the forthcoming election in Sylhet.
He will try to be an Awami League candidate for Sunamganj-5 (Chatak-Duara) constituency.
He is one of a growing number of Londonis in the wake of 1/11 who feel desperate 'to go home and contribute their skills and efforts to their motherland.'
I met Ali during my ongoing project exploring the complex relationship between Sylhet and the UK. It has brought me in contact with countless thoughtful people but also much pessimism and defeatism. Spending time with Ali and listening to his vision, calm optimism and clarity of thought would strike a chord with even the most cynical of journalists.
'The time has come for real change. Not just words, but actually making a genuine difference,' said Ayub Korom Ali.
'Tackling youth unemployment is crucial to future prosperity of the country. Young people are our most

Workshop on violence against women held

Speakers at a workshop titled, 'Effectiveness of Existing Law to Prevent Violence against Women' held at Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) office here yesterday stressed on creating mass awareness about violence against women.
Women's Right Unit of RDRS organised the workshop chaired by its programme manager Zeba Afroza. Md Akhter Hossain, ASP of Dinajpur attended as chief guest while Dinajpur Mayor Md Shafiqul Haque was special guest.
One person was killed and four others were injured while overhauling the Ashuganj Zia fertiliser factory Saturday evening.
The dead was identified as Md. Abdur Rauf, 32, a factory worker, during by falling into the repairing boiler-tank while they were doing the overhauling work in the factory of Ashuganj Zia Fertilizer Company Limited (ZFCL) on Saturday night.
Factory sources said worker Md. Abul Kalam slipped into the LDC boiler of the ammonia plant. Four other workers including Abdur Rauf tried to save him and fell into the boiler.
All the five were rescued and sent to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital in critical condition, where doctors declared Md. Abdur Rauf dead. The injured are being treated.



Korom Ali talking to people at Duara in Sunamganj.



Sylhet city BNP chief Ariful gets bail

A High Court (HC) bench yesterday granted bail to Sylhet City BNP chief Ariful Haque Chowdhury who was detained in connection with an extortion case.
The bench comprising Justice Tariqul Hakim and Justice Sheikh Abdul Awal granted him interim bail for four months after a hearing on the day.
Advocate M Rafiqul Haque Talukder and Advocate Shahidur Rahman filed the bail prayer on Thursday.
Dilar Ahmed, a leading contractor of Sylhet City Corporation filed the case against him on June 19 last year.
He alleged that Arif had called him at his Kumarpara house on March 30, 2006. The BNP leader demanded a big amount of money from him as illegal toll promising allotment of major development work of the corporation. Later, Dilar paid Arif Tk 15 lakh as illegal toll.
On investigation, police submitted charge sheet against the BNP leader on July 16 last year. The case is under trial at Sylhet Anti-Smuggling Court.
Arif had been in jail since February 25 last year as he has been facing three other criminal cases including one under EPR.
A court here sentenced him three years rigorous imprisonment in a corruption case months ago. Later, he was granted bail from HC. But he is yet to get bail in a tax evasion filed under EPR.

Demolition of Lalon sculpture a conspiracy

3-day protests begin in Rajshahi; rally, human chain held in Nilphamari, Dinajpur
Protests against demolition of Lalon sculpture in the capital by religious bigots continued yesterday in districts. The protesters demanded re-installation of the sculpture, saying it is expressive of Bangladesh's rich culture and heritage.
In Rajshahi University, Sculpture Protection Mancho, a newly floated organisation of over 20 cultural bodies and students organisation, yesterday launched a three-day programme on the campus demanding re-installation of the Baul sculpture near Zia International Airport in Dhaka.
On the first day, the Mancho held a rally in front of Madhu Canteen and vowed to resist anarchy and violence in the name of religion.
Leaders at the rally also expressed solidarity with the proposal to name of Zia Chhatras' Baul Chhatrar.
They said demolition of the Lalon sculpture is apart of an evil design by fundamentalist forces to destabilise the situation ahead of the election. It is a plot against Bangla culture and tradition, and also the spirit of the Liberation war, they said.
The programme includes sit-in demonstration and cultural programme today (Monday), protest art exhibition and rally and human chain on the campus tomorrow.
Earlier on the day, Bangladesh Cultural Union (BCU), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) and Progotoshil Chhatra Jote (PCJ) at RU formed separate human chains and held protest rallies on the campus demanding re-installation of the sculpture.
In Nilphamari, different socio-cultural organizations formed a human chain and held a rally at Chowring intersection in the town demanding re-setting of the sculpture.
Local Udichi Shilphi Ghosti, Muktiyoddha Smriti Pathagar, Mohila Parishad, Sahitto Parishad, Sammlito Sangskritik Jote, Bhawyaia Academy, Shilpi Samaj, Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirml Committee jointly organized the programmes.

Squabbles in Khulna JP

Four bigwigs to vie for nomination in Khulna-3
Intra-party squabbles in Khulna Jatiya Party (Ershad) have come to the surface.
Four leaders belonging to two factions of the party are likely to vie for nomination to contest from Khulna-3 (Daulatpur-Khalishpur) constituency in the coming parliamentary election.
They are central organising secretary and ex-lawmaker Abdul Gaffar Biswas, central vice-chairman and ex-whip Hasina Banu Shirin, general secretary of its

Advertisement for Wockhardt Hospital & Kidney Institute. Includes text: 'Prostate Problem???' 'Kidney Stone???' 'Do you have to visit toilet more often than usual?' 'Do you feel pain in your back or below the ribs?' 'If yes, then consult an urologist. You might be suffering from Prostate Problem or Kidney Stone. What to do?'