

# Grabbing on as river 'missing' in land office documents

Houses, factories, farmlands occupy most of Jamuneswari flowing thru' Nilphamari town

EAM ASADUZZAMAN,  
Nilphamari

Old Jamuneswari River, flowing through Nilphamari town for hundreds of years, is non-existent in the land department's official maps and documents.

The riverbed areas are shown as usual lands and private properties, giving encroachers a sort of impunity against their illegal act.

However, the river, popularly known as 'Bamondanga', still flows as a narrow canal while nine big bridges over its course through the municipality bears testimony to its once mighty existence.

On its bank was set up once busy river port Shakha Machha Bander that eventually developed into Nilphamari town around hundred years ago.

In mid sixties a leader of the then Muslim League grabbed a large portion of the river to extend his homestead near Baroipara in the town.

From then on, grabbing has continued on the 30-metre wide riverbed stretching about eight kilometres from near district police lines to Circuit House.

Rice mills, jute pressing mills, godowns for tobacco leaves and other commercial infrastructures along with residential buildings were constructed even on the riverbed.

With drastic fall in its flow, the river dries up in summer and floods in rainy season.

The riverbed areas at places appear as marshy lands



PHOTO: STAR

Encroachers have erected concrete walls and put piles of sandbags on the bed of Jamuneswari River at Baroipara in Nilphamari, stagnating the watercourse flowing through the town.

or farmlands while the grabbers claim to be legal owners of the riverbed as they have documents like deed of purchase from previous owners, mutation certificate and latest land survey record.

During an inquiry about the river at the local land office it was found that the State Acquisition (SA) map drawn in 1962 shows no sign of this river although in the Cadastral Survey (CS) map drawn in early twentieth century, there is clear evidence of the river's existence.

A history book titled

'Nilphamarir Itihas' also gives a brief description of the river.

"Although Bamondanga River became part of our culture in the region, it now seems a past history," said octogenarian Lokman Hossain, a resident of Kanial Khata village beside the river, also the founder of Bamondanga Football Club.

Nilphamari municipality Mayor Dewan Kamal Ahmed expressed his utter helplessness to recover the river from grabbers as he has no magistracy power.

"The present government is very sincere to free rivers from illegal grabbers. We are looking into the matter," ADC (Revenue) of Nilphamari Mooloy Kumar Roy told newsmen.

"Filling up the riverbed will bring ecological disaster. We will consult Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association about legal proceedings against the grabbers to recover the river," said SJ Alam, executive director of Campaign for Assistance, Mobility and Promotion (CAMP), a local NGO working for environment protection.

## Bangla Bhai's top aide held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Rajshahi

Naogaon Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Shariatullah Simar, one of the top associates of JMB's executed leader Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai, from the district town yesterday.

Simar, 42, as the in-charge of Bangla Bhai's torture camp at Bheti Madrasa in Raninagar upazila of Naogaon in 2004, was involved in a number of killings and incidents of torture, sources said.

Law enforcers started interrogating Simar after a DB team arrested him from Baludanga Bus Stand in Naogaon, police said.

Bangla Bhai's gang led by Simar killed development worker Ziaul Haq Zia of Abadpukur in Raninagar at Bheti camp on November 13 in 2004.

A gang led by Simar also killed Idris Ali Khejur in May 2004.

Simar kept holding Abdul Quayum Badsha as JMB cadre Hafez Mahmud killed Badsha by slitting his throat in presence of Bangla Bhai in May 2004.

## Microbus driver killed, 2 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Kurigram

Police yesterday arrested two persons in Kurigram Sadar upazila for killing a microbus driver the same day.

At about 9:00am, residents of East Umananda village under Ulipur upazila saw two people from a micro-bus keeping a body in a jute field near East Umananda Non-government Primary School, police said.

The two persons left the scene with the microbus immediately.

Informed by people, Ulipur police contacted law enforcers in Kurigram Sadar upazila.

At about 1:00pm, Traffic Sergeant Sagar seized the microbus at Dhasherhat in Sadar upazila and arrested Rabiul, 25, of Gopalpur village under Mithapukur upazila, and Parvez, 27, of New Shalban in Kotwaly thana under Rangpur.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Students of Rajshahi Institute of Health Technology demonstrate on the campus yesterday to press home their demands including cancellation of new admission rules.

# 35 sued for '71 war crimes in Khulna, Bagerhat dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Khulna

Thirty-five collaborators of Pakistani occupation forces have been sued for killing, looting and arson in Khulna and Bagerhat districts in 1971.

Freedom fighter Jalil Mallick of Shantoshpur village under Rampal upazila filed a petition case with Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court, Bagerhat, on Monday against 25 collaborators.

In the case statement, the complainant said the accused shot dead Santosh Debnath, Jogeshwar Pal, Khorshed Mallick, Swapan Debnath, Shadhan Debnath, Rakkhal Debnath, Narayan Debnath, Sunil Debnath and Bijoy Das on Chulhati High School premises under Bagerhat Sadar upazila at 10:00am on October 14, 1971. They later set

fire to 18 shops at Chulhati Bazar.

The court asked the officer-in-charge (OC) of Bagerhat Sadar Police Station to record the case after proper investigation.

Another petition case was recorded with Dakop Police Station of Khulna district the same day, accusing eight rajakars of killing a freedom fighter during the Liberation War.

The accused are Nausher Ali Sheikh, Zahur Sheikh, Sohrab Molla, Hafiz Sheikh, Shafi Gazi, Asmat Gazi, Elahi Sana and Monir Sana.

The complainant, Shukjan Bibi of Naldanga village under the upazila, stated in the case that the accused gunned down her freedom fighter husband Mahatab Biswas at noon on August 10 in 1971 at Gallamari rajakar camp and then looted their house.

Another petition case was filed with the Court of Magistrate Nirmalendu Das, Khulna, yesterday against two collaborators for killing 60 people, including six of a family, in 1971.

The court has fixed July 20 for hearing of the petition case.

The complainant, Rokeya Begum, wife of martyred freedom fighter Ismail Hossain alias Choto Khoka of Dearha village under Digholia upazila, filed the case.

In her petition case, Rokeya alleged that a total of 21 collaborators of Pakistani occupation forces picked up 60 people, including her husband and five other members of her family, from their houses on August 27, 1971 and killed them at Bihari Colony at Dearha village under Digholia upazila the same day.

## SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

### Touchstone statue recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police recovered a touchstone statue of Hindu goddess 'Kali' worth Tk 2.5 crore in Srimongal upazila on Monday night. Acting on a tip-off, the law enforcers went to Shankarsena village and recovered the statue weighing 2.5 kilogram from the roof of the house of a former UP member. They took the statue to Srimongal Police Station.



### 11 hurt in Natore clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Natore

At least 11 people were injured, six of them seriously, in a clash between the activists of Jubo League and Jubo Dal at Biprobeldharia village in Sadar upazila yesterday morning over establishing supremacy in the area. Police and locals said AL activists, led by Ramzan Ali and Shahidul Islam, attacked the house of Jubo Dal activist Bablu in the morning. As Bablu's followers counter attacked, there ensued a clash between the two rival groups. The seriously injured were admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital.

### BCL activists block road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Transport came to a halt for about an hour on Rikabibazar-Lamabazar road causing untold sufferings to commuters as unruly activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) put up a barricade on the road on Monday night protesting arrest of some fellows on charge of extortion. The BCL men were caught by traders at Rathajatra fair at Rikabibazar in the city at about 9:00pm. Later, they were handed over to police. At this stage, a group of BCL activists swooped on police and snatched away their fellows, police and locals said.

### Indian sarees seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

BDR personnel seized smuggled Indian sarees, three piece garments, pants and T-shirts worth 13 lakh taka in Phulbari upazila yesterday afternoon, BDR sources said. BDR recovered those while being transported to other parts of the country from Kawkhalmore in Phulbari Sadar upazila. Earlier, the clothes were imported from India illegally.

## SATKHIRA CINEMA BLAST

# Bomaru Mizan on remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Satkhira

Banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) bomb expert Bomaru Mizan was yesterday placed on a seven-day remand in the case for Satkhira Stadium blast on September 28 in 2002.

Held on June 14 from Sheorapara of Mirpur in Dhaka, Mizan was later shown arrested in the cases for September 28 Satkhira Stadium blast and Roxy Cinema Hall blast in 2002.

Soon after assuming power, the present government revived the cases although the then investigation officers (IOs) in 2004 submitted final reports in the cases for the two blasts, court sources said.

As IO of the case, Inspector Amir Ali of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) brought JMB bomb expert Bomaru Mizan from Dhaka jail and produced him before Satkhira Chief judicial Magistrate's Court yesterday. Judge AKM Shamsul Arefin passed the order for seven-day remand after a long hearing.

JMB bomb expert Zahidul Islam alias Sumon alias Bomaru Mizan hails from village Shekherbitha in Jamalpur Sadar upazila.

A powerful bomb blast rocked Roxy Cinema Hall at about 7:30pm on September 28 in 2002, leaving one person dead on the spot. Five minutes later, another blast at a circus party programme in Satkhira Stadium left two persons killed.

Nearly 125 others were wounded in the two explosions.

Soon after the incidents, police arrested at least 10 people including two commissioners of Satkhira pourasava in this connection.

CID Inspector Sukho Ranjan Samaddar, the then IO of Roxy Cinema Hall blast case, submitted final report on January 29 in 2004 and CID Assistant Superintendent of Police Mawla Boks, the IO in the Stadium blast case, submitted final report in the case on January 31 in 2004.

The present government revived the cases and asked the CID to re-investigate them.

# Indefinite bus strike in five SW districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Khulna

Bus services on 28 routes in five southwestern districts came to a halt as owners and workers yesterday began an indefinite strike to press home their six-point demand.

Bus owners and workers associations of Khulna, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Jhalakati and Barisal districts have jointly enforced the strike, causing untold sufferings to thousands of passengers of the five districts.

The demands include withdrawal of state-owned BRTC buses from 28 routes of the districts, withdrawal of the cases filed against owners and workers of private-owned buses, stoppage of movement of any passenger bus on these

routes from outside the five districts, framing of an acceptable policy to ensure safe movement of private-owned buses and full implementation of the decisions taken on April 23 at a tripartite meeting in the Ministry of Communications.

The Ministry of Communications formed a nine-member committee on June 12 to examine the demands. Report of the committee is yet to be submitted to the authorities concerned.

"We have been compelled to go on strike from today as the deadline to meet our six-point demand expired on June 29," said Md Nazrul Islam Montu, president of Bagerhat Inter-district Bus Owners' Association.

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Philanthropist, late Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah is seen laying the foundation stone of Janata Jute Mills Ltd. on 4th April, 1967. Also seen in the picture second from the right is late Alhaj Shamsuddin Miah, the then Chairman, and next to him is late Alhaj Mozammel Huq, the Founder Managing Director of Janata Jute Mills Ltd. The mill went into commercial production on 1st July, 1969.

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