

Transit planned but rail tracks in sorry state

RABIUL HASAN, *C'nawabganj*

Hundred-year-old railway tracks and stations in Chapainawabganj are in a deplorable condition although the governments of Bangladesh and India have agreed to use Rohanpur-Singhabad rail link for transporting goods to Nepal from Bangladesh.

A railway link between Rohanpur and Singhabad of Indian Maldah district to facilitate transit from Bangladesh to Nepal through India was decided during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to India.

About 80 percent sleepers of 52-kilometre Chapainawabganj-Rajshahi route and 39-kilometre Chapainawabganj-Amnura-Rohanpur route are damaged and without adequate stone chips, railway department sources said.

To avoid accident on the risky route, trains run very slowly, between 10 and 15 kilometres an hour, still at least five incidents of train derailment occurred on the two routes last year, they said.

The railway tracks on Chapainawabganj-Rohanpur route,

which is important for export-import business, got damaged due to lack of maintenance in last three decades, said Mohammad Moniruzzaman, stationmaster of Chapainawabganj railway station.

Wishing anonymity, an official of the station said the government usually earned Tk 2-3 lakh per day from this station 15 years ago but it now earns only between Tk 300 and 400 a day.

The government earned Tk 4.9 crore in revenue from 1,30,618 tonnes of imported goods at Rohanpur railway port in 2008-2009 fiscal year while the railway department earned Tk 87.60 lakh by carrying passengers and goods, railway sources said.

Exporters and importers, who use Sonamasjid land port, said they have to bear 30 to 40 percent additional carrying cost for transporting goods on roads as they avoid Rohanpur railway route due to its dilapidated condition.

Nepal and Bhutan are interested to use Mongla port for their international trade. A high official business delegation of Nepal visited Rohanpur railway station and saw its facilities in 2008.

Rohanpur-Khulna rail route can help the two countries transport their goods up to Mongla port at a cheap cost and short time.

Officials of Railway's West Zone in Rajshahi said the government recently sanctioned Tk 155.46 crore for repairing rail lines, 11 station buildings and platforms, 21 bridges and culverts and signals of Chapainawabganj-Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj-Amnura-Rohanpur routes.

Earlier on August 22 in 2007, May 29 in 2008 and December 22 in 2008, railway department called tender for repairing and modernising the rail lines but all the times the tender process was cancelled due to various reasons.

In September 2009, a tender was invited again. The tender is now under process and construction work would begin this year, said Additional Chief Engineer (Track) Mozammel Haque.

Rafiqul Islam, president of Exporters and Importers Association at Sonamasjid land port, said Bangladesh has a bright prospect of business through Rohanpur rail port due to its communication facilities with India.



Two labourers are seen repairing rail lines near the outer signal of Chapainawabganj railway station recently as the tracks, laid without any stone chips, have turned risky for trains. PHOTO: STAR

Case for bombing Sk Helal's public meet revived

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

The case for bomb attack on Sheikh Helal's public meeting at Mollahat upazila of Bagerhat district in 2001 has been revived.

Inspector Haripada Biswas of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Bagerhat, is the new investigation officer (IO) of the case.

Proceedings of the case were suspended on April 19 in 2004 on the basis of recommendation of a Judicial Inquiry commission.

Inspector Haripada Biswas told this correspondent on Friday that the monitoring cell of the home ministry on January 13 took the decision to revive the case and asked the CID to start further investigation.

Accordingly, I filed an application with the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate,

Bagerhat on January 31, seeking permission to revive the case for further investigation. The court permitted the CID to go for fresh investigation into the case the same day, Inspector Haripada further said.

Nine people were killed and 54 others injured in bomb attack on a rally of Sheikh Helaluddin at Khalilur Rahman Degree College ground on September 23, 2001.

The then president of AL Mollahat upazila unit Chowdhury Ziaul Alam filed a case with Mollahat Police Station the following day naming BNP Bagerhat district president and former lawmaker MAH Selim and 165 others as accused.

ASP Mowla Bux of CID Jessore zone submitted final report to Special Tribunal-1 of Bagerhat on December 7, 2003.

Historic Atia mosque about to wear away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

Four hundred years old Atia Mosque in Delduar upazila of Tangail district shows signs of all neglect although the Department of Archaeology took its charge in 1978.

The gorgeous structure decorated with intricate terracotta patterns has become faded while the ornamental plaques on the nine-feet wide walls are wearing away as during the last three decades, there has been hardly any initiative for its protection, let alone bringing it back to the past splendour.

Marking 400 years of the mosque, a discussion was held on the premises of Shahan Shah High School yesterday.

The programme also saw publication ceremony of Atianama, a book on the historic mosque.

Food and Disaster Management

Minister Dr Abdur Razzak attended as chief guest at the discussion presided over by Tangail Deputy Commissioner M Bazul Karim Chowdhury.

Lawmaker from Tangail-6 (Nagarpur-Delduar) Khandakar Abdul Baten, Jahangirnagar University Archaeological Department teacher Prof Dr Shah Nawaz, Tangail Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman, Tangail district Awami League General Secretary Fazlur Rahman Faruque, Delduar Upazila Parishad Chairman Motiar Rahman and Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shibir Bichitra Barua addressed, among others.

Speakers vowed to preserve the mosque as well as other archaeological sites and structures in the district to make the future generation aware of the country's rich culture and heritage.

According to archaeology department

officials and local historians, zamindar Syed Khan Panni, who received Atia Pargana as a gift from Mughal Emperor Jahangir in early 17th century, built the mosque in 1609.

Best masons and artisans of the time were employed for the purpose.

The mosque is near the shrine of Hazrat Shahan Shah, who came to Atia from Kashmir in 913 Hijri along with his 39 followers to preach Islam in the region. Their graves are also near the mosque.

The mosque was badly damaged by an earthquake in 1800. Later in 1837, Rowshan Khatoon Chowdhurani, a female merchant from Delhi, reconstructed the damaged mosque.

Abu Ahmed Guznavi Khan, the zamindar of Delduar, together with Wazed Ali Khan Panni and other zamindars of the area repaired it again in 1909.

'Conspiracy on to thwart trial of war criminals'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee has reiterated its demand for immediate trial of the war criminals and restoration of the 1972 constitution.

The demand was again raised at the conference of the committee's Rajshahi district unit at Zila Parishad auditorium yesterday.

Chaired by language movement veteran Abu Hossain, the conference was addressed, among others, by Nirmul Committee acting President Shahriar Kabir, Vice President Muntasir Mamun, General Secretary Kazi Mukul, Rajshahi unit General Secretary Sayed Shafikul Alam, Rajshahi University pro-Vice Chancellor Muhammad Nurullah, former vice chancellor Abdul

Khaleque, Dr Sujit Sarker, and Muktiyuddho Pathagar President Shafiqur Rahman Badsha

The speakers said the conspirators, who helped Pakistani occupation forces during Liberation War and killed the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, are now active and trying to thwart the trial of war criminals.

Shahriar Kabir in his speech said the war criminals are hatching new conspiracies at home and abroad against the present government. So trial of the war criminals should start as early as possible, he added.

Muntasir Mamun said the government must set an example by holding the trial of the war criminals under the War Crimes Act of 1973.



Four century-old Atia Mosque in Delduar upazila of Tangail still remains an impressive structure. Inset, artistic terracotta decorations of the beautiful mosque are decaying due to lack of proper maintenance. PHOTO: STAR

Schoolgirl abducted a week ago yet to be rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

A schoolgirl who was abducted last Sunday by a gang of youths in front of her school gate at Kalmeg village in Baliadangi upazila is yet to be rescued after a week of the incident.

Victim Rokshana Pervin, 14, is daughter of Rafiqul Islam of Kazibasti village in the same upazila.

As soon as Rokshana came out of R Ali High School for taking launch at her house at about 1:30pm on Sunday, about four youths led by Rezaul Islam, 26, son of Nazir Uddin of Kazibosti village intercepted her in front of the school gate, family sources said. Then the youths picked up her inside a 'Mishuk' and

drove away, they said. However, a school peon, Khalilur Rahman by name witnessed the incident and informed it immediately to the family members and the school authorities.

Rokshana's father Rafiqul Islam filed an abduction case with Baliadangi police station on Tuesday afternoon accusing four people including Rezaul. In the case, Rafiqul mentioned that Rezaul is a derailed youth who often teased her daughter.

Thakurgaon superintendent of police (SP) visited the spot and ordered a search operation to rescue the girl.

Earlier at an arbitration, Rezaul was compelled to give an undertaking to the R Ali School authorities saying he would refrain from disturbing Rokshana.

Girl 'abuser' arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Police yesterday arrested one of the culprits who abused a schoolgirl at Mushuriapara village of Ishwardi upazila on Wednesday last.

The arrestee is Musa, 22, son of Abdul Aziz of the same village. Prime accused Dukhu, 23, is still at large.

Dukhu and his accomplices intercepted Brishti, 12, a class seven student of Bangabandhu School at Mushuriapara, while she was going home from school during tiffin break at noon and physically abused her in public.

Brishti went home and committed suicide by hanging herself in the afternoon.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Belayet Hossain of Ishwardi Police Station said they, acting on a tip-off, raided Musa's house at noon and arrested him. "We are looking for main culprit Dukhu of the village," he added.

Two housewives commit 'suicide' on trivial issues

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A housewife and a college student allegedly committed suicide in Narail and Chuadanga districts yesterday and the day before.

According to a correspondent in Narail, a housewife allegedly committed suicide yesterday as she was not allowed to go to parent's house in Chittagong.

Victim Riar, 22, wife of Shamim Sikdar of Laskarpur village under Sadar upazila killed herself hanging from a ceiling fan.

Neighbours said, Shamim, son of Shaheb Ali Sikdar, after a long love affair married Riar before the last Eid-ul-Azha.

On the fateful day, Riar

felt extremely offended by Shamim's attitude and killed herself in her living room at about 9:00 in the morning.

She was rushed to Narail Sadar Hospital where the attending doctor declared her dead.

A UD case has been filed with Sadar police station.

Our Correspondent in Kushtia reports: A college student allegedly committed suicide at Nurpur in Sadar upazila in Chuadanga on Friday morning.

Police and family sources said Iti Khatun, 22, daughter of Khoda Box of Nurpur was married to Sharin Hossain of the same village two years ago. Iti was a third year student

of Chuadanga Government College.

Sources said their conjugal life was not so happy due to different causes including unemployment of Sharin.

Besides, Sharin made a remark on Iti's character when her elder sister Furti went to Iti's house a few days ago.

It deteriorated their relationship further.

On Friday morning, Iti locked her room from inside and hanged herself.

Family members of Sharin smelt the matter at noon. They informed police. Police broke open the door, recovered the body and handed it over to Iti's parents.

The body was buried the same night.

SNIPPETS

BSF kills Bangladeshi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader on Telipara border under Tentulia upazila. Victim Farid Hossain, 28, was son of Dabir Uddin of Sharijoth village under Tentulia upazila. BDR and locals said, BSF members at Hentulia goach camp opened fire on a group of cattle traders near pillar no 443 on Telipara border while they were returning home with cattle. Farid died on the spot but his fellows managed to escape unhurt. BSF personnel took away the body immediately after the incident. BDR strongly protested the unprovoked killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body.

50,000 yaba tablets seized

UNB, *Comilla*

Members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in a drive recovered 50,000 sex stimulant yaba tablets from Jaluapara in Sadar upazila Friday night. A special patrol team of 33 Rifles Battalion led by Havilder Abu Taher conducted a drive at about 8:00pm on secret information and recovered the tablets worth about Tk 4 crore kept in 50 cartons. However, the border guards could not arrest anybody as the smugglers fled the scene sensing their presence.

One held with fake notes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested one person with fake notes from Hamdah bazaar in Jibonnagar upazila in Chuadanga on Friday. Arrestee Abdul Hakim, 45, hailed from Bhoirab village in Mohespur upazila in Jhenidah district. With the arrest of Hakim, two top bosses of an organised gang of fake note traders were held in Chuadanga in last four days. Earlier, on Wednesday, Rab arrested Golam Mostafa from Chuadanga town on charge of fake note trade. A local BNP leader, Mostafa is former deputy commander of Bangladesh Muktiyoddaha Sangsad, Chuadanga district unit.

27 shops gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khagrachhari*

At least 27 shops and other business establishments were gutted in fire damaging goods and valuables at a local market under Sadar upazila early yesterday. Fire service sources said, the fire originated from a cotton shop and engulfed adjacent 26 shops. It burnt to ashes property worth Tk 80 lakh, according to a primary estimate.

20kg silver seized, 1 held

UNB, *Satkhira*

Members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested a 'smuggler' along with 20kg Indian silver from Waria village in Sadar upazila Friday. Arrestee Mokhesur Rahman is son of Anwar Ali of Bamdah village in the upazila. Acting on a tip-off, a team from Jhaodanga BDR camp raided the village at about 10:00am and arrested Mokhesur while he was going to Dhaka by a motorbike. Later, the border guards recovered the silver from his possession and also seized the bike. The seized goods were handed over to local customs and a case was filed in this connection.

Teenage boy killed

UNB, *Patuakhali*

A teenage boy was killed while a man was injured as a pillar of an under-construction shop collapsed on them at fish market in Kalapara upazila headquarters yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Zahid Hasan, 13. Hospital and local sources said, the pillar collapsed on Zahid and Abdur Rab, 55, at about 10:30am leaving them critically injured. They were rushed to the upazila health complex where the attending doctors declared Zahid dead.

Fertiliser recovered

UNB, *Jhenidah*

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel in a drive recovered 310 sacks of smuggled Potash fertiliser from a truck in the town's truck terminal on Thursday. Acting on secret information, a team of the elite force raided the terminal and seized the fertiliser from the truck. Rab sources said, sensing their presence the driver managed to flee the scene.

Indian held in Bandarban

BSS, *Rangamati*

Army and police rounded up an Indian citizen from Ruma Bazar under Ruma upazila of the hill district of Bandarban on Friday. Police said Ram Mohan, 37, was held for his suspicious movement. A citizen of Mizoram state, Ram Mohan illegally entered Bangladesh. He is now being interrogated under police custody. A case was lodged with Ruma police in this connection.