



PHOTO: STAR

A passenger bus gets stuck while crossing dangerously risky Shoula bridge on Patuakhali-Baufal-Dashmina road during low tide a few days ago. With rise of water level due to tidal surge, communications between Patuakhali district headquarters and Baufal and Dashmina upazilas remain cut, much to the sufferings of about six lakh people.

## Sorrow of two Patuakhali upazilas

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Patuakhali

Communications between district headquarters and two upazilas remained cut off for the last five days as a bridge went underwater due to tidal surge.

About six lakh people of Baufal and Dashmina upazilas are suffering a lot as water level in the rivers soared because of full moon.

Vehicular movement has come to a halt for five days from May 26 on Patuakhali-Dashmina via Baufal road as the bridge over Shoula canal on the road went underwater.

Since cyclone 'Aila', vehicles ply to and from the district headquarters depending on high and low tide as the bridge often goes under 6-7 feet water, locals said.

During high tide vehicles cannot cross the bridge but at the time of low tide vehicles move with life risk. During tidal surge, the bridge goes 6-7 feet down from road level.

Communications will resume in a day or two with the fall in when water level in

the Patuakhali river, people of the area said.

However, passengers now have to take bus or others vehicles from east side of the bridge about 6 kilometres off the district headquarters.

Earlier several hundred locals formed human chains on February 28 and May 6 this year demanding reconstruction of the bridge but to no effect.

Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) built the road to make communications easier between Dashmina and Baufal upazilas and the district headquarters.

Gulam Maula Dulu, secretary of Patuakhali Bus Owners Association said people are suffering a lot as people cannot avail buses because of the bridge condition.

Contacted, SM Abdus Salam, executive engineer at Patuakhali LGED said that a project to rebuild the bridge at a cost of Tk 1.80 crore was approved on March 2.

"We already have selected a contractor but we couldn't start work for lack of fund," he said.

## Cancel lease, save Matasagar

Human chain in Dinajpur urges govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Dinajpur

A human chain was formed in front of Dinajpur Press Club yesterday demanding cancellation of lease of 'Matasagar', a large water body on around 45.31 acres of land under Sadar upazila.

The four-party alliance government leased 'Matasagar' to an influential BNP leader who has allegedly set up poultry farm, rice mills and some other business establishments, encroaching on the water body.

Leaders of the political parties, local newsmen and representatives from different socio-cultural and non-governmental organisations joined the human chain arranged by Matasagar Rakkha Committee.

Addressing a rally at the venue, the speakers urged the government to cancel the lease of 'Matasagar' to stop encroachment on the water body.

They said the water body has lost its beauty as the lessee has set up poultry farm, rice mills, levelling the high lands around it.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals form a human chain in front of Dinajpur press club yesterday demanding cancellation of the lease of Matasagar, a large water body near the town, and steps to save the picturesque area from grabbers.

Shariful Ahsan Lal, acting general secretary of Dinajpur Awami League alleged that BNP government leased out the water body, violating the rules. He demanded immediate cancellation of the lease.

Dinajpur Press Club President Chittya Ghosh, General Secretary Golam Nabi Dulal, Convener of Matasagar Rakkha Committee Prof

Saifuddin Akter also spoke.

The speakers demanded that the government also take steps to protect Dinajpur Rajbari, Boromath, Ramsagar, Anandasagar, Kantanagar Temple, Sukhsagar, Julumsagar, Padma Sagar and Harisagar.

The Matasagar Rakkha Committee will hold its programme in the capital today

(Wednesday). Addressing a press conference at Dinajpur Press Club on Monday, Prof Saifuddin, convener of the committee, said they will continue their programme until the demand is met.

Rezaur Rahman Rezu, general secretary of Dinajpur Udichi and other members of the committee were present at the press conference.

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