



PHOTO: STAR
A bus moves with difficulty on potholed Netrakona-Mohanganj road. Inset, an awfully dilapidated bailey bridge at Thakurkona on the road poses serious risk for passengers.

Commuters suffer on decrepit Netrakona-Mohanganj road

Dilapidated bailey bridge makes the journey risky

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The 28-kilometre Netrakona-Mohanganj road connecting Netrakona with the rest of the country has become awfully dilapidated, causing an untold suffering to about 24 lakh people in eight upazilas of Netrakona and Sunamganj districts.

Besides, condition of the bailey bridge over Kangsa River at Thakurkona is pitiable as portions of the railings, pillars and floors of the bridge have broken.

Abul Kashem, a driver who drives a passenger bus on the road, said, "We have to pass the bridge carefully and very slowly. The bridge shakes when vehicles ply it. We have to cross the road risking the lives of passengers and ours."

Expressing dismay at the condition of the road,

Nurunnabi, a commuter, said passengers receive injuries frequently as vehicles shake constantly throughout the journey. Sometimes drivers lose control for bad shape of the road.

The government sanctioned Tk 9.70 crore for the repair and renovation works of the road and a contractor was appointed for executing the repair works two years ago, said Netrakona Roads and Highways Department (RHD) office sources.

The works were not, however, completed even after two years due to lack of sincerity and honesty of the concerned contractor who stopped the works only after one fourth of the work was done violating the conditions of the work orders.

The RHD hung a sign-

board in front of the approach road giving cautionary signal for the passengers and the drivers of the vehicles to drive slowly and carefully, as the bailey bridge is vulnerable.

Meanwhile, the government allocated Tk 4.53cr for repair and reconstruction of the bridge and a contractor had been assigned by the authority to start the work.

The contractor could not, however, start the work due to the reason unknown.

When contacted, the executive engineer of the Netrakona RHD Mohammad Nurul Amin said the repair works of the road could not be completed due to negligence of the contractor.

Decision will be taken soon about the restart of the repair work, he said, adding that Ashraf Ali Khasru, the local MP, stopped the work

three months ago.

Local MP Ashraf Ali Khasru said he had to stop the work for its poor construction as he found on a spot visit at the work site.

They are going to take steps to start the work again after a decision with the RHD, the MP added.

Feroj Miah, the manager of Shamim Construction that was given the work, said the work was temporarily stopped. They hope they will get order to start the work again soon, he added.

On the start of maintenance works of the bailey bridge, Nurul Amin said the allocated money has yet to reach to the concerned bank account.

The RHD put up a signboard in front of the approach road giving cautionary signal, as the bailey bridge is vulnerable.

Ruling party men 'grab' private land at Cox's Bazar

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three leaders of associate organisations of ruling Awami League have allegedly grabbed land of five plots worth about Tk one crore belonging to five persons including teachers and housewives inside Chandrima Housing Society at Kolatoli in Cox's Bazar town.

The three alleged grabbers are district Jubo League General Secretary Mahbubur Rahman, district Swachhchasebok League General Secretary Kaisarul Haque and district Jubo Mohila League President Ayesha Siraj.

During a visit to the spot on Monday, this correspondent found five signboards hung on the land of Chandrima Housing Society to the south of Kolatoli hills adjacent to the seabeach.

There are writings of the signboards claiming that Mahbubur Rahman, Kaisarul Haque Jewel and Ayesha Siraj and others owned the land measuring three acres by virtue of purchase.

"On Sunday night, some criminals forcibly entered the area of Chandrima Housing Society, grabbed five plots of land (bearing numbers 31, 39, 40, 41 and 42) and hung signboards there in the name of some leaders of the associate

organisations of the ruling party," said President of Chandrima Housing Society Prof Azizur Rahman.

He said the Society, registered with the Department of Cooperatives in 1995, bought 25 acres of land from different persons, divided the area into 170 plots and gave allotment to its members.

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The real owners of the grabbed land are retired principal of Cox's Bazar

Government College Sirajul Mostafa, Professor of Chittagong Government Mohsin College Hasina Momtaz, a local businessman's daughter Nawshin Awal, and housewives Lutfunnessa and Sufia Akhter.

Prof Hasina Momtaz said she would resort to law against grabbing of her plot.

Asked about grabbing the plots and hanging signboards, district Jubo League General Secretary Mahbubur Rahman said he gave some 'advance money' to buy some land in the area and thereby the signboard was hung.

"In case the land on which the signboard was hung fell under the Society's plots, I will return it," he said.

Asked why it was claimed in the signboard that he was the owner of the land by virtue of purchase, Mahbubur Rahman said his workers did 'a little excess' in this regard.

District Swachhchasebok's League GS Kaisarul Haque said he did not buy any land in Chandrima area.

He said local workers of Swachhchasebok League and Jubo League informed him of acquiring some government khas land. He claimed that they hung the signboards without telling him anything about purchase of land.

Jubo Mohila League's Ayesha Siraj said she heard about the hanging of signboard in her name but she or her family had no links with the matter.

Requesting anonymity, a district-level leader of Awami League said they would extend full cooperation to the affected persons if they resort to law.



PHOTO: STAR
A signboard, put up on the land of Chandrima Housing Society at Kolatoli in Cox's Bazar on Sunday night, claims that three ruling party leaders own three acres of land there by purchase although its actual owners, five people including professors and housewives, have not sold the land to anyone.

Tk 23cr Mongla Port project suspended since mid June

Gross irregularities alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The 'Navigational Aids to Mongla Port' project has remained suspended since mid-June this year following reports of gross irregularities in implementation of the Tk 23 crore project.

Earlier, a three-member probe committee of Implementation Monitoring and Executing Department (IMED) of the Ministry of Planning submitted a report to the secretary of shipping ministry, suggesting removal of the project director, Harbour Master of Mongla Port Commander Enamul Haque, as the allegations of irregularities were found true.

Following the nine-page report of the committee headed by IMED Assistant Director Babulal Rabi Das on June 8, Enamul Haque was stripped off his authority to work as the project director

pending investigation against him.

The shipping ministry also stopped all works related with project soon after receiving report on probe findings.

Commander Enamul Haque is also facing an enquiry into allegations against him by another three-member committee headed by Md Alauddin, joint secretary (Administration) of the Ministry of Shipping.

The ministry formed the high-powered committee on April 4.

The government undertook the project in May 2008 for improvement of navigational system including construction of a light tower to enable ships ply the sea and rivers safely both at daytime and during night. The project was to complete by 2012.

Tenders for the project were invited three times

from January 20 last year. But work order could not be given to the deserving winner reportedly due to reluctance and high-handedness of project director Commander Enamul Haque.

"Gross irregularities and corrupt practices in tendering process were detected during investigation by the IMED team that visited Mongla on May 6 to enquire into the cause for delay in giving work order," said Md Mahbub Ullah, director (Traffic) of Mongla Port Authority.

The report recommended punishment for the persons responsible for delaying implementation of the project through different tactics for illegal financial gain.

The IMED team conducted the enquiries following written allegations made by the second lowest tenderer of the project Md Nazmul Haque Khan, proprietor of Messers Arup

Enterprise in Khulna.

Besides, one Habibur Rahman of Bagerhat wrote an application to the Prime Minister's Office alleging different corrupt practices and unfair means committed by the project director in dealing with project affairs.

Contacted by this correspondent on Tuesday, Enamul Haque denied the allegations against him, saying, "None of the tenderers qualified for the project. So I had to delay for tender."

The high level three-member team did not take his statement during investigation into the allegations, he added.

The chairman of Mongla Port Authority, Commander AK Azad, said that a new project director would be appointed soon for re-start work for implementation of the project.

Extortionist arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Extortionists damaged at least five CNG-run vehicles at Kashinathpur bus stand on the Dhaka-Pabna highway yesterday morning.

Police arrested one of the gang on the spot. The arrestee is Bipul, 25, of Kashinathpur village under Santhia upazila of the district.

Police and transport workers said Bipul and his accomplices came to Kashinathpur bus stand at around 10:00am and demanded illegal toll from vehicles. As the transport workers refused to pay them toll, they damaged five vehicles on the bus stand.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot and arrested Bipul.

Argument in Sunamganj grenade attack case Oct 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Muhammad Mahbub Ul Islam on Wednesday fixed October 7 for argument in two cases filed after the grenade attack on a rally of AL leader Suranjit Sengupta MP in Sunamganj in 2004.

On September 15, the judge recorded the deposition of seven police Inspectors who had served as investigation officers of the cases.

An Awami League activist was killed and 30 others were

injured in the attack.

Two cases--one under explosive Substances Act and the other for murder were filed after the grenade attack on June 21, 2004 at Derai upazila headquarters in Sunamganj.

However, Suranjit Sengupta and some other leaders escaped unhurt as they got down from the dais just moments ahead of the attack.

CID Inspector Shafiqur Rahman on December 14, 2008 filed charge sheets in the two cases with the Judicial magistrate court in Sunamganj against the Huji

chief Mufti Abdul Hannan and six others, court sources said.

The court on June 30 this year framed charges against the accused and started recording the deposition on 13 July, court sources said.

The other accused are Mufti Abdul Hannan's younger brother Mofizul Islam alias Mohibullah, Shariful Alam Bipul, Delwar Hossain Ripon, Hafiz Nayeem Ahmed, Mufti Main Uddin and Nazir Rahman Nazir.

The cases were transferred to the speedy trial tribunal through a gazette notification issued by the home ministry.

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