

Saga about road to Kuakata

Despite all, the road still remains virtually unusable

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

A large portion of Kuakata-Kalapara road has remained in an awful condition as the contractors employed by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) discontinued the repair work seven months ago, shortly after its start.

Consequently, the road had remained virtually unusable, much to the sufferings of commuters, tourists and traders.

The RHD renovated 62 km road from Lebukhali ferry ghat to Kalapara upazila town this year, department sources said.

Authorities issued work order to construction firms Khan Enterprise and Rupsha Enterprise for renovation of 21.50 km long road from Kalapara to Kuakata.

The estimated cost, Tk 53.96 crore included Tk 40 crore for renovation of the road and the rest 13.96 crore for acquisition of land. But only Tk 19 crore has been given to local RHD till now.

Rupsha Enterprise of Khulna got work order for renovation of 11 km road and Khan Enterprise got the order for rest 10.50 km.

After Rupsha Enterprise started its works on March 17 in 2011 Patuakhali RHD officials of Kalapara Circle visited the site. Expressing dissatisfaction over low quality of the work, the officials verbally ordered the firm to stop carpeting on the road but the firm continued the work.

Later another team led by Gulzar Hossain, superintendent engineer of RHD, and

Kamolendu Majumder, executive engineer for RHD in Patuakhali, visited the site and saw the same scene. The team also asked the firm to stop the work but the contractor continued the same with low quality materials. After completing carpeting works of 5 km road, the firm left the site in June as the rains began.

Khan Enterprise also left the site after completing the 'base and sub base' work on 10.50 km of the road at the onset of the rains.

Quality of the work of Khan Enterprise was also very bad and payment to the firm was suspended due to this, said RHD officials.

"After joining here in October in 2011 I visited the sites more than once and found faults in the works.

Rupsha Enterprise left the site in June and we issued at least 25 letters to the firm to complete the work as soon as possible. Rupsha Enterprise promised over letters to complete the work by ensuring quality," said Kamolendu Majumder, executive engineer for Patuakhali RHD.

Md Lutfar Rahman, project director of Rupsha Enterprise, said, "We are facing fund crisis and so, we could not complete our work. We stopped the work in June. Quality could not be controlled properly as the rainy season started. We will restart work very soon and we hope that we will be able to complete the work in the scheduled time."

Mahfuz Khan, proprietor

of Khan Enterprise, also said that they had to stop the repair work due to the rains.

A number of potholes appeared in the 21.50 km long road from Kalapara to Kuakata during the last several months.

When this correspondent visited the road a few days ago, he saw over 30 vehicles including passenger buses, hilsa loaded trucks and microbuses stuck in holes at different spots on the road like Pakhimara, Ghutabacha, Hazipur and Omedpur as there was unexpected rain during the dry season.

Tourists are suffering a lot due to dilapidated condition of the lone road leading to Kuakata sea beach.

Kuakata was declared Exclusive Tourist Zone in 1996 but there has been hardly any infrastructural development to attract tourists.

"The beauty of Kuakata reaches its peak during the rainy season but the area becomes almost inaccessible at the time," Golam Sarwar, owner of Sky Palace hotel in Kuakata.

Commuters, especially people requiring urgent medical help, suffer a lot due to lack of usable roads.

Hilsa and hatchery industries are also affected due to bad shape of the roads, said traders.

"The bad shape of the road is causing huge losses to our industry. When a loaded truck gets stuck in a pothole, our merchandise gets rotten," Fazlu Gazi, president of Mohipur Hilsa Traders Association, said.

"We are starting periodic maintenance in order to keep those road fit to use in the rainy season under Periodic Maintenance Programme," the executive engineer of Patuakhali RHD said.



PHOTO: STAR

Potholes developed on muddy Kalapara-Kuakata Road following off-season rain a few days ago cause trouble to vehicles plying the road with tourists as well as local passengers aboard.



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers pile up bottle gourds at Mohishlet village in Haluaghat upazila of Mymensingh district prior to its loading in a vehicle heading for the capital a couple of days ago. The area sees a good yield of the popular winter vegetable this season.

SNIPPETS

BSF detains Bangladeshi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) detained a Bangladeshi youth on Monday morning near Ratnai border under Baliadangi upazila. The arrestee was Motiur Rahman, 25, son of Aoizuddin of Kashipur village under the upazila. Commanding Officer of 30, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) battalion Lt Col Touhidul Islam told this correspondent over cell phone that BSF men of Sonamoti camp held the youth near Ratnai border for entering India illegally. At a company commander level flag meeting, held at the zero line later, BSF informed BGB that Motiur was handed over to Islampur police in West Bengal.

Mugger beaten dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A mob beat an alleged mugger dead after he was caught red-handed in Khulna city Sunday night. Golam Rasul Kalu, 30, was held while running away with the valuables taken away from a person at Purba Baniakhamar around 11:00pm, said senior sub-inspector Asmani Khanam, also the acting officer in-charge of Khulna Kotwali police station. The mob beat Kalu indiscriminately, leaving him seriously injured. On information, police rushed Kalu to Khulna Medical College and Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 11:30pm, the police official said. His hands and legs were broken and the tendon of one of his legs was severed, SI Julhas Uddin of the police station said.

50 hurt in B'baria clash

UNB, Brahmanbaria

At least 50 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups over establishing supremacy at Char Chartola village in Ashuganj upazila Sunday noon. Abdul Kader, officer in-charge of Ashuganj police station said supporters of Anu Sardar and Kiski of the village locked in an altercation in the morning over a trifling matter. Later, both the groups equipped with lethal weapons and sticks attacked each other, leaving 50 people injured from both sides, at about 12:00 noon.

Butcher fined in Satkhira

UNB, Satkhira

A butcher was fined Tk 500 for slaughtering a dead cow at Patkelghata Bazaar in Tala upazila on Sunday. Locals said Ahmed Ali, 40, son of Rajab Ali of Khorda village, bought a sick cow which died before it was taken to the bazaar at about 12:00 noon. However, he slaughtered the dead cow. On information, UNO Mahbubur Rahman along with upazila assistant commissioner (land) and upazila sanitary officer rushed to the spot. They held the culprit and fined him.

Sylhet schoolboy killers jailed

Murder of 3 schoolboys in Jhenidah protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal yesterday sentenced five people to life term imprisonment for killing a schoolboy in the city in 2008.

The convicts are Sharif Miah, Selim Mia, Salai Mia, Adu Miah and his brother Dudu Miah - all from Kushituk Nayabasti village under Kotwali police station.

According to the prosecution of the case, at about 3:00 pm on 1 July in 2008, the aforesaid people were dumping sand illegally lifted from the nearby Surma, on a piece of land belonging to Nurul Haque Kunu Miah of Mirerchak Noyabasti.

While returning from school, Nurul Haque's son Sumon Ahmed, 14, asked them to stop dumping sand on their land. At a stage of altercation, the group

swooped on the boy. They hit him with spade, shovel etc causing his instant death.

Sumon's father filed a case with the Kotwali PS and police arrested them. Sub-inspector Akikul Islam investigated the case at the beginning. Later, sub-inspector Anjan Roy completed it and submitted chargesheet against five.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal judge Dilip Devnath awarded them life term imprisonment and fined Tk 20,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more in jail.

In Jhenidah, a human chain was formed in the district town demanding arrest and exemplary punishment of the killers of three students from December 16, 2011 to January 14, 2012 under Sadar upazila.

Hundreds of students, teachers and guardians took part in the human chain

programme held at Paira Chhatra, reports our correspondent.

On December 16, 2011, police recovered the body of Shrabanti Khatun, a student of class three after five days of her abduction for ransom. Her body was found under the Dhophagata bridge in the town.

On December 20, 2011, Hamidur Rahman, a student of first year at a local technical school and college was found dead at an underconstruction house at Chaklapara village in the town, nine days after his abduction for ransom.

On January 14, 2012, Jhenidah police recovered the body of Antor Roy Chowdhury from Jhenidah Government Boy's Pilot High School ground under Sadar upazila. He was a student of class ten at Kanchon Nagar High School in the district town.

Aminur Rahman Tuku, activist of a human rights body said, the guardians of the students in the district are in panic. He demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the killers.

Guardian of a student Faruk Hossain said, "We pass time in anxiety when our sons and daughters leave home for school. We want security and safe return of our wards".

Sazzad Hossain, a student of class nine at a local school said, "The incidents of abduction and murder one after another have become a matter of panic and concern for the school students".

Contacted, SP Rezaul Karim of Jhenidah said, they have already arrested eight people on charge of abduction and murder. "We are taking appropriate steps to stop recurrence of such incidents," he said.

Follow-up

'Ringleader' of rly fuel stealing scam claims innocence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Foysal Alam Bigyan, the alleged ringleader of Parbatipur Locomotive Shed fuel stealing scam, yesterday claimed that he has no involvement with fuel stealing incident.

"I was never involved with fuel stealing of Parbatipur Locomotive Shed nor did I influence any officials or staffs in this regard. The news published against me is false, motivated and fabricated," Bigyan, an expelled leader of Parbatipur upazila unit of Awami League, said at a press conference at his business centre 'Risti Enterprise' in Parbatipur municipality yesterday.

Bigyan, a former relief and rehabilitation secretary of Parbatipur upazila AL, also urged the investigation teams to go 'deep' into the incident.

Meanwhile, the two persons arrested by GRP police on Saturday evening in the wake of fuel stealing scam at Parbatipur Locomotive Shed, got bail from a court in Dinajpur on Sunday, sources said.

Parbatipur GRP had charged the two arrestees - Md Asaduzzaman Kusum, 28, of Islampur Kalibari of Parbatipur municipality, and Monrul Islam, 30, of Rahmatpur of Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur, under Section 54.

No case is yet to be filed regarding the fuel stealing incident, said Md Emdadul

Haque, officer in charge of Parbatipur GRP.

Several railway officials and local elderly citizens of Parbatipur upazila expressed dismay over bail of the two arrestees and lack of administrative action against a few railway officials allegedly involved with fuel stealing.

Pointed his finger to railway security personnel including a few officials of Parbatipur GRP for rampant fuel stealing, freedom fighter Jahurul Islam said, "Parbatipur Locomotive Shed and its surrounding places are highly protected areas and so, it is impossible to steal fuel from the shed and train engines without any help of railway officials and staff."

"Fuel stealing in the area is not likely to be stopped as the key persons allegedly operating the fuel stealing network are still to be caught," said an official of Parbatipur Railway Station seeking anonymity.

With spread of the fuel stealing scam, nine people of Parbatipur Railway and GRP have been suspended since Saturday.

Meanwhile, members of the two probe teams formed on Saturday to investigate the alleged fuel stealing, visited the spot on Sunday and later left for Dhaka with their findings.

The report will be filed within a day or two, said an investigator.

2 electrocuted in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Two persons were electrocuted in Tarash upazila on Sunday night.

The victims were identified as Abdul Mazed, 45, and his cousin Shahadat Hossain, 25, of Thanapara village under the same upazila.

Ataur Rahman, OC of Tarash PS said Abdul Mazed went to his crop field where he was electrocuted while operating his power pump.

His cousin Shahadat was also electrocuted as he tried to save him.

Locals took them to Tarash upazila health complex where the attending doctor declared them dead.



PHOTO: STAR

A black faced baboon was electrocuted at Keshobpur upazila headquarters yesterday. The large monkey came in touch with a live electric wire while it along with four others jumped off a tree onto the roof of Keshobpur police station in the morning.