

TK 132CR SYLHET FLOOD CONTROL, IRRIGATION PROJECT

Construction of mega pump house remains halted

Local material supplier blamed for the stalemate, charge-sheeted in extortion case

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Work for construction of a Tk 35-crore pump house meant for a gigantic flood control and irrigational project in the district have remained suspended for over six months amid 'extortion' by the local material supplier.

Water Development Board's (WDB) undertook the initiative to build the pump house at Rahimpur in Zakiganj upazila of the district, under the Tk 132-crore Upper Surma-Kushiyara Project spreading over five upazilas in Sylhet district.

Meanwhile, Detective Branch (DB) of police submitted charge sheet against three people including the main accused in the extortion case weeks ago.

WDB awarded Hasan and Brothers, a Dhaka-based firm, the Tk 35 crore

contract for constructing a pump house at Rahimpur canal in Zakiganj upazila in June last year but only after a month, the contractor's men left the site due to security reasons.

"We stopped taking materials from local supplier Ekram Uddin Suja as he supplied low quality stone and sand for the project. But he created pressure for accepting the materials and demanded money for it," said SM Manir Uddin, manager of Hasan and Brothers.

"Suspending the works, we left the site in late July last year on security grounds as Ekram and his men, who live near the project site, threatened our people with serious consequences," Manir said.

In August last year, Manir filed an extortion case against Ekram Uddin and police arrested him

several days later. Coming out on bail after weeks, Ekram filed a counter case accusing Manir, and others including the local union parishad chairman on November 6.

Later police submitted the final report in the case filed by Ekram as it was found baseless, police said.

"We will resume the work if the WDB and local administration provide us security," Manir said.

Contacted, Sylhet Superintendent of Police Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain said, "As the works of an important project remained suspended, the lawmen took it seriously and the cases were transferred to the Detective Branch.

Weeks ago, DB Sub-Inspector Abdus Salam filed charge sheet against three accused including Ekram, DB sources said.

"Implementation of the Upper Surma project is a long-standing demand in the region as we have been suffering much in absence of such an irrigation and flood control project. We want early resumption of the work since it would greatly benefit the people of Zakiganj, Beanibazar, Kanaighat, Golapganj and Sylhet Sadar upazilas," said Mashuk Uddin Ahmed, former chairman of Zakiganj upazila parishad.

Contacted, Shailen Chandra Paul, executive engineer of the WDB in Sylhet, said, "We hope the contractor will be able to resume construction of the pump house in a month or two."

Despite attempts for a couple of days, this correspondent failed to contact accused Ekram Uddin for his version as his mobile was found off.



Indian Border Security Force (BSF) started constructing a culvert over Kalondi canal, only ten metres from the zero line on Akhaura border, on Saturday afternoon, creating a tense situation in the area. Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) instantly protested the matter and the unwanted construction stopped following a flag meeting between BGB and BSF yesterday, BGB officials said.

SSC examinee commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

An SSC examinee allegedly committed suicide over a family feud in Dhanbari upazila yesterday noon.

The deceased was identified as Roiz Uddin, 20, son of Asgar Ali of Chardanga village.

Mominur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Dhanbari Police Station, said Roiz quarreled with her step-mother on Sunday night and took his life by hanging himself from a ceiling fan at his residence at noon.

On information, police recovered the body from the spot and sent to Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Fish trader fined for selling jatka

UNB, Bagerhat

A mobile court fined a fish trader Tk 5,000 for selling jatka (hilsa fry) at KB Bazar in the district town on Sunday.

The convict is Faruk Hossain Hawladar, 32, son of Moktar Hossain Howladar of the town.

A team of Detective Branch (DB) of police conducted a drive at the wholesale fish market in the evening and arrested Faruk along with 240 kilogram of jatka.

Later, the arrestee was produced before the court led by Executive Magistrate Moshir Rahman who penalised the fish trader.

BSF picks up one from Hatibandha border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) picked up a Bangladeshi youth from a paddy field in Genduguri Border area of Hatibandha upazila yesterday afternoon.

The youth was identified as Sadekul Islam, 19, son of Sayed Ali of Singimari village, said Havilder Abdur Rouf, commander of Singimari BGB camp.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) sent a letter to its Indian counterpart to return the youth, but BSF didn't respond till filling of this report at 6:00pm yesterday, Abdur Rouf added.



A dockyard for building and repair of trawlers occupies the bank of Bakkhali River at Fisheryghat in Cox's Bazar town as authorities are turning a blind eye to the impact of the callous act on local environment. The photo was taken on Sunday.

Bid to sell fertiliser on black market, 2 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police on Sunday night foiled an attempt to sell 1.65 tonnes of fertilisers on a black market in Galachipa upazila and arrested two people.

The arrestees are Nasir Howlader, 35, a fertiliser trader of Amkhola Bazar in Galachipa upazila, and Nazrul Islam, 25, a truck driver of the area.

When a fertiliser-laden truck was crossing the Sonali bank area in Patuakhali town at around 8:00pm, a police challenged the truck and seized it as dealer Nasir failed to show valid papers.

The arrestees told police that they were carrying fertilisers to Amkhola Bazar in Galachipa upazila from Patuakhali town to sell them in a black market, said Md Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Patuakhali Police Station.

A case filed with Patuakhali Police Station.

UNB from Bagerhat reports: Members of Bangladesh Coastguard arrested a trader along with 21, 200 kgs of fertiliser at Chalna Bazar in Dakope upazila of the district on Sunday evening.

The arrestee was identified as Ibadat Hossain, 43, a fertiliser trader of the bazar.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of coastguard raided the bazaar and arrested Ibadat Hossain for hoarded 21,200 kgs of fertiliser, said M Hassanuzaman, staff officer of coastguard Mongla west zone.

ATTEMPT TO RAPE DANCER AT SATKHIRA

Charge-sheeted ex-BCL man holds press confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Shaikh of Satkhira Sadar police station on January 31.

Both of them were later expelled from the party.

The accused hired the dancer from Khulna city for a function held on January 4 at Satkhira Shilpakala Academy marking 64th founding anniversary of Chhatra League.

The victim dancer lodged an FIR with Satkhira Sadar police station on January 5 against the two BCL leaders and later it was recorded under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Claiming that a section of rivals in Satkhira Chhatra League falsely implicated Jewel and Palash in the incident to defame them, a visibly restless Jewel hurriedly left the place after yesterday's press conference.

Sheikh Jewel, president of now dissolved Satkhira district Chhatra League, wanted in an attempted rape case filed on January 5, addressed a press conference at Khulna Press Club yesterday.

He along with Nazmul Huda Palash, general secretary of the district committee of the same party, is charge-sheeted accused in the case for rape attempt on a dancer at Satkhira on the night of January 4.

Police arrested Palash on the same night while Sheikh Jewel was shown 'absconding' in the charge sheet submitted to the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Shahidul Islam by investigation officer of the case, Inspector Ratan

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