



# 22km bumpy journey in Nilphamari

## No road repair despite human chain, bus strike

**EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari**

The 22-kilometre-long road connecting Nilphamari town and Domar upazila headquarters in the district has become virtually unfit for vehicular movement due to lack of repair for long.

Loaded trucks and passenger buses now move very slowly to avert accidents on the road. A good number of them have already stopped operation there.

Visiting the area on Feb 20, this correspondent saw a number of ditches and holes on the road.

"I usually go to Nilphamari from Domar most of the weekdays. For this I start from my house at 7:00am but cannot reach my destination in time as journey on the potholed road takes much longer than usual time," said Mahabbat Hossain, a

resident of Domar.

"Most of the bus owners do not like to operate their buses on this route as the vehicles are damaged and accidents occur due to bad shape of the road. We will have to stop plying of buses here if the road is not repaired immediately," said Shahjahan Choudhury, president of district bus owners association.

Following tender for development work of 82-km road stretching over Dinajpur, Nilphamari and Panchagarh districts under the government's 'Road Network Improvement and Maintenance project-2 (RNIMP-2)', work order was given to construction firm 'Abdul Monem Limited' on June 25 in 2008, Roads and Highways Department (RHD) sources said. But the firm could not start the work on 22 km Nilphamari-

Domar road in time due to various complexities.

Asian Development Bank that is financing the project earlier asked for completion of the work within June 30 last year but the time limit was extended to June 30 this year.

When contacted, Sharifuzzaman, project manager of Abdul Monem Ltd, said, "Under RNIMP-2 project, we had finished most of the road development work in Dinajpur and Panchagarh. But we could not start the work for 22 km Nilphamari-Domar road as the authority concerned did not hand over the land for road expansion in time."

"Now the land has been given and we are ready to start work. But we cannot do it due to time constraint. We requested the authority to extend the time limit till June 30 in

2013 but the request is yet to be granted," he said.

Sajedur Rahman, sub divisional engineer of RNIMP-2 project, said due to complexities in land requisition, it was not possible to hand over land to the construction firm in time.

Demanding immediate start of road construction work Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported by different professional groups organised a 22-kilometre-long human chain along Nilphamari-Domar road on January 25.

Bus owners association also announced suspension of bus operation on the road from January 29 when authorities persuaded them to withdraw the strike by giving assurance to start the repair work immediately. But there is no sign of starting the work yet.

Run-down Nilphamari-Domar road appears more like a rugged landscape, making vehicular movement a hard job. The photo was taken from Polashbari point of the road last week.

PHOTO: STAR

### SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: STAR

A month-long programme to celebrate 60 years of the language movement and 48th founding anniversary at Sudhijan Pathagar, a library, at Narayangaj ended Friday. Language veteran and litterateur Ahmad Rafiq distributed prizes among the winners of study-circle, Bengali spelling and quiz competition. Asjadul Kibria and Afzal Hossain spoke at the concluding function chaired by library director Muhammad Ayub.

### HMIS launched in Khulna

Khulna City Corporation with technical assistance from German Development Corporation (GIZ) yesterday launched the work for implementation of 'Health Management Information System (HMIS)'. Prof Syed Modasser Ali, advisor to the prime minister for health, inaugurated the programme at a city hotel as chief guest. He said healthcare service would be ensured for the people through implementation of digital Bangladesh. Aim of HMIS is to reach better healthcare services to the doorsteps of KCC people as quickly as possible, said Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque while addressing the inaugural function. This programme under KCC has been launched for the first time in the country.

### Launch passengers injured

Several passengers were injured as launch workers attacked them in Sadar upazila yesterday. On information, police rushed to the spot and arrested two people in this connection. The arrestees are supervisor Zillur Rahman, 32, and Mohammad Motaleb, 30, an engineman of passenger Launch 'MV Kajol'. Zahair Ahmed, sub-inspector of Sadar Model police station, said the Barguna-bound launch from Dhaka reached Chandpur port at around 12:30am, nearly two hours after its scheduled time. Angry passengers protested the irregularities. At this, the staffs of the launch swooped on the passengers and charged batons on them.

### Trader beaten to death

A cloth trader was beaten to death by his neighbour following a dispute catching fish at Kalaigobindapur village in Sadar upazila yesterday. The deceased is Bachchu Mia, 40, of the village. Police said Bachchu had a longstanding dispute with one of his neighbours over the ownership of a pond adjacent to his house. The victim was attacked by his rival when he went to catch fish in the pond at noon. Bacchu was rushed to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital in critical condition where he died.

### Jubo League leader stabbed

Criminals stabbed a local Jubo League leader at Sujalpur Jamtola Crossing on the outskirts of the Jessore town yesterday. The victim is Kabir Hossain, vice president of Arabpur union Jubo League and son of Aminullah of Vekutia Colony area in Sadar upazila. Locals said, a gang of criminals swooped on Kabir when he reached the area on a motorbike in the morning. At one stage, they stabbed him indiscriminately, leaving him injured critically. He was rushed to Jessore 250-bed General Hospital.

### Four youths jailed for stalking

A mobile court at Barhatta upazila on Sunday night sentenced four youths to jail for stalking a madrasa girl. The convicts are Tanvir Ahmed Sohag, son of Abdul Haque, Sumon Mia, son of Ainuddin Talukder, Niharul Islam, son of Zahidul Islam and Mizanur Rahaman, son of Sirajuddin of village Ujangaon under Barhatta upazila. Police sources said, the four stalkers used to stalk the girl of the same village. She is a student of class ten at Monash Dakil Madrasa.

## Water crisis hits nut farming in Kurigram

**ABDUL WAHED, Kurigram**

Nut farming is being hampered in char areas of Kurigram district due to acute water crisis. Leaves of nut plants on around 500 acres of land in char areas of Ulipur, Chilmari, Rajarhat and Kurigram Sadar upazilas are becoming dry due to lack of rain.

Nut is produced on sandy soil and it is one of the main crops of the char people. They also cultivate pulses and corns on the spaces between nut plant rows.

While visiting Kalia Alga Char in Sadar upazila recently, nut grower Md Asad Ali, also a member of Jatrapur Union Parishad, told this correspondent that he got 100 maunds of nut from 20 acres of land last year. "Despite getting enough rainwater, I had to spent Tk 900 on per acre of land to get water from shallow tube-well," Asad said, adding that he has cultivated nut only on 10 acres of land

this years due to acute water crisis.

Farmers of Tin Hazari Char, Barobish Char, Jhunkar Char and Doikhawa Char also face the same problem as they have not got enough rainwater this year.

Dense fog also damaged nut plants, but local agriculture office did not take any step to supply plants to the affected growers, they alleged.

Abdul Mannan Master of Kalia Alga Char said, "I have cultivated nut in some acres of land this year but leaves of plants are getting dry for want of required water.

Md Majnur Rashid, agriculture officer of Kurigram Sadar upazila said water crises has been created in the areas as there was no rain in the months of December and January.

Some farmers of the char areas came to me last year to take advice about nut cultivation, but no one has come this year, the agriculture officer said.



PHOTO: STAR

Nut plants on a field at Kalir Alga Char in Kurigram Sadar upazila are dying due to lack of water, much to the worry of local farmers.

## 2 abducted girls still untraced

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narail**

Two schoolgirls, kidnapped in Sadar upazila last month, are yet to be rescued.

The victims, daughters of Nazrul Islam and late Biplob Sheikh of Gobra village, are students of class four and class five at a local school.

Family members said one Salim Mollah, Rashed Mollah, Monirul Mollah and Shimul of the village and Alam Sheikh of Agdia and Kajol Ali of Boro Achra village in Benapole, intercepted the two cousins on their way to relative's house and abducted them on January 3.

Biplob's wife filed a case with Sadar police station in connection with the incident on

January 12. But the law enforcers are yet to take any steps to rescue the duo a month into the abduction, they alleged.

The plaintiff said Salim Mollah, a member of human traffickers' gang, lured many women and took them to India. "Salim abducted my daughter and niece as I rejected his proposal to marry my daughter a few months ago".

Meanwhile, the kidnappers were threatening the two cousins on their way to relative's house and abducted them on January 3.

Contacted, the duty officer at the police station, said they were trying to rescue the schoolgirls.

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