

Maize-laden trucks kept on highway pose risk

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Long queue of maize-laden trucks are occupying nearly half of the width of over two kilometre stretch of Thakurgaon-Panchagarh highway as trucks regularly come to supply maize to Kazi Feed Mills Ltd at Salondar village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

The situation has continued since the beginning of maize procurement season early last month, much to the sufferings of a large number of commuters, especially school and college going students.

Local people and commuters have demanded that the mills authorities change their procurement schedule

either by arranging the task at night or changing their procurement centre from the highway to relieve the commuters from hassles and risk of accidents.

During a visit to the area on Thursday, this correspondent saw that vehicles were moving with difficulty due to lack of space as over 150 maize-laden trucks were kept on Thakurgaon-Panchagarh highway on the left side from Kazi Feed Mills at Salondar village to Technical Training Centre at Telipara village under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

"Frequent road accidents occur in Thakurgaon Feed Mills area due to long queue of maize-laden trucks during maize procurement season. At least four people

were killed and many others injured here in maize procurement seasons during last two years," said Salondar union parishad Chairman Fazle Elahi.

Many students of several villages including Mondalpara, Hindupara, Shahapara, Denishpara and Telipara, who are studying at Salondar primary, girls' and boys' high schools and Salondar Degree College, have stopped attending classes to avoid troublesome movement on the road occupied by trucks, he said.

"Despite our appeal to the mill authorities and local police and civil administration for the last three years, no steps have been taken to solve the problem," he added.

When contacted, General

Manager of Kazi Farms Ltd Md Mizanur Rahman told this correspondent over cell phone, "We have already given notice to temporarily stop maize procurement when collection of the crop from those standing trucks on the highway completes within two or three days."

Replying to a query he said, "We have contact with 89 trucks that are standing on the highway but we have no responsibility about the other trucks. Next time we will give purchase order in advance to procure 30-40 truckloads of maize. After that if the suppliers from across the country come with trucks and keep those on the road we have nothing to do."

He said this season's maize procurement will be complete by June.

Mill sources and traders, however, said maize procurement in last year continued till the end of August.

Acting Superintendent of Police Nahidul Islam said, "The farm created similar problem in the last maize procurement season too. This time we gave them repeated notice to resolve the problem but to no effect. At last we sent a letter to the superintending engineer of Rangpur Roads and Highways Department asking for a racker to seize the trucks that remained standing on the highways."

Similar situation has arisen at another point of Thakurgaon-Panchagarh highway at Sipaipara village under Boda upazila in Panchagarh in front of Kazi Feed Mills, another farm of Kazi Farms Ltd, locals said.



PHOTO: STAR

Batches of maize-laden trucks occupy for weeks over two kilometre stretch of Thakurgaon-Panchagarh highway at Salondar village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila causing nuisance to commuters while authorities of Kazi Feed Mills Ltd that created the situation for procurement of maize are turning a blind eye to the public demand for alternative arrangement.

15 injured in Jubo Dal infighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 15 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of Jubo Dal in the district town yesterday.

The clash took place at about 12:30pm following a dispute over reception to Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, BNP district unit president.

Police and locals said two factions of the party one allegedly led by Zakir Mridha and Sujon and the other by Monirul Islam, town unit convener, attacked each other, leaving 15 from both sides injured.

Of the injured, Jasim, 32, unit joint convener, was admitted to Patuakhali General Hospital while the rest were given first aid.

The incident occurred when Altaf, also the former minister, was coming to the district from Dhaka.

Two children rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police rescued two minor girls from the town's railway station on Friday afternoon and look them to safe custody.

The rescued children were identified as Jesmin, 7, and Bonna Akter, 8.

They could not give their address, but informed police the names of their fathers as Nabir Hossain and Aktar Mia. Police also recovered two schoolbags from them.

The rescued children informed police that they were students of a school located at Uttara in Dhaka and came to Dinajpur by an intercity train.

They said that they fled from schools as their teachers often punish them at classes.

Pabna farmers protest erratic power supply

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Hundreds of farmers in Atghoria upazila put up barricade on Pabna-Chatmohar highway yesterday demanding uninterrupted power supply for irrigation of boro fields.

The agitating farmers also brought out a procession which paraded the main streets of the upazila headquarters.

Later, at a rally, they threatened to go for a tougher programme if their demand was not met within four days.

Shahidul Islam Ratan, upazila unit AL secretary and also the representative of farmers, upazila irriga-

tion pump owner's association leaders Zohurul Islam and Abdul Gafur Mia, spoke at the rally.

The speakers said that erratic power supply under Palli Biddut samity (PBS)-1 was disrupting irrigation in the area.

We did not get even one hour power supply for operating irrigation pumps. Though there was electricity at night, the pumps did not work due to low voltage, they alleged.

Ratan said, over 250 irrigation pumps went out of order due to the erratic power supply, causing untold sufferings to boro farmers.

Hundreds of acres of cultivable land remained dry for

inadequate supply of power, threatening boro farming in Atghoria, Chatmohar and Bhangura and Ishwardi upazilas, sources said.

The protesters threatened to besiege PBS-1 office on April 5 if their demand was not met within the deadline.

Abdul Matin, general manager of PBS-1, said they were getting only 12 to 15 megawatt power in peak hour while the requirement was around 35MW.

"So, how could we supply electricity as per demand?" he posed.

Low voltage often hampers operation of over 4,000 power pumps in the four upazilas, he said.

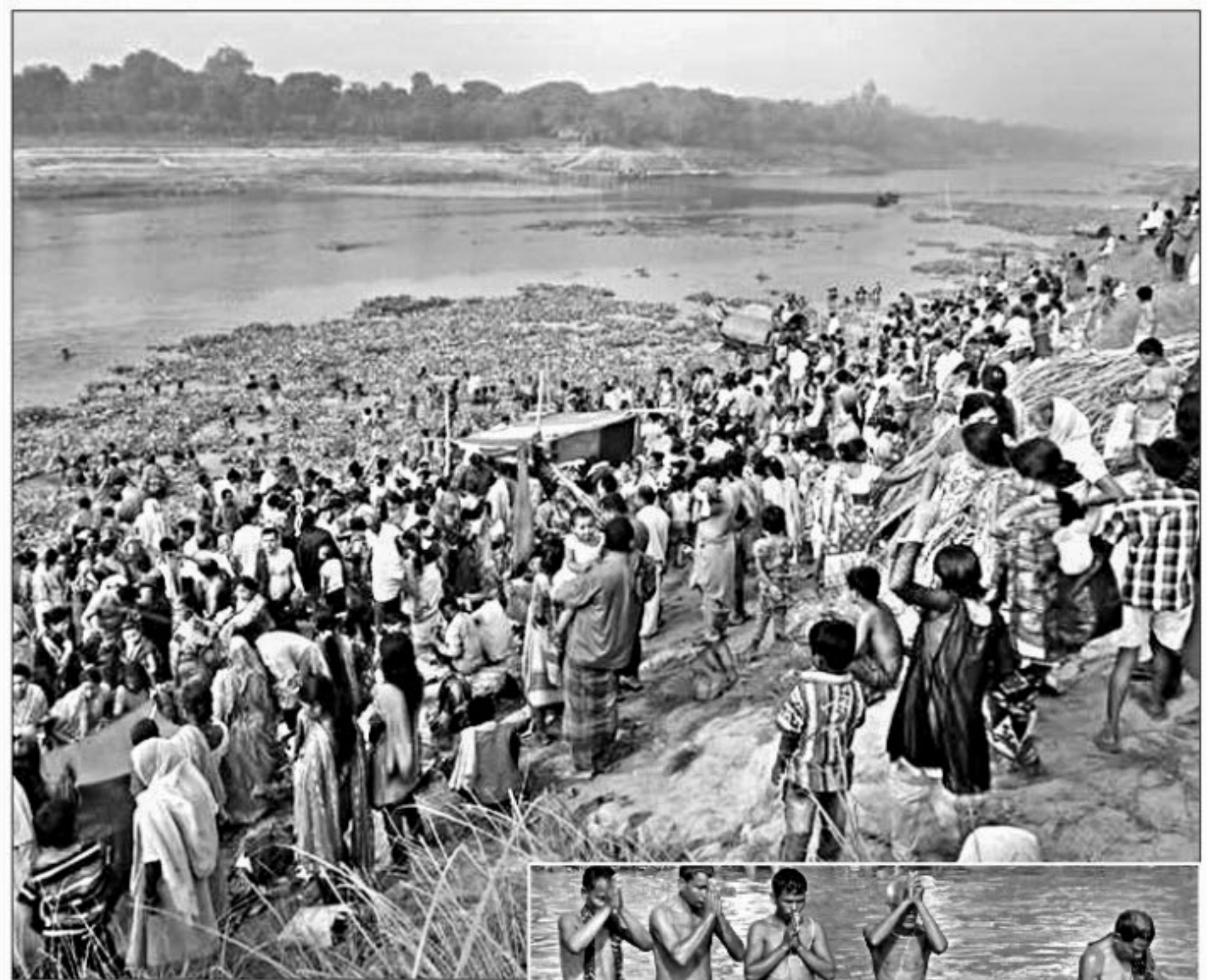


PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of Hindus gather at Beutha point of Kaliganga River in Manikganj to take holy dip, inset, devotees at Ramna Ghat point of Brahmaputra River in Chilmari upazila of Kurigram on the occasion of Astami Snan yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

POETRY FESTIVAL ON RIVER: From left, poet Shamsul Haque, Jute and Textiles Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui, lawmaker Abdul Mannan and former director general of National Museum Dr Enamul Haque are seen at the specially prepared stage on the Bangalee River at Bhelurpara in Sonatala upzila under Bogra district as Bogra Sahitya O Sanskritik Asar organised a poetry festival there yesterday. The festival demanded re-excavation of the river.

BIRD FLU

Fowls culled at poultry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Over 1000 chickens were culled at a poultry farm in the district on Friday night following detection of bird flu.

District livestock officials along with the executive magistrates went to Bhai Bhai Poultry Firm at Ghoshpur village and culled the birds.

Owner of the firm Md. Jahangir Alam said at least 40 to 50 chickens overnight died at his farm a few days ago.

He immediately informed the district livestock officials who collected the samples of the dead chickens and sent those to laboratory for list.

On confirmation of bird flu, a team led by additional district livestock officer HM Abul Kashem, executive magistrate Md. Shakhawat Hossain went to the farm on Friday night.

They culled 1,153 layer chickens, destroyed 7,663 eggs and dumped those under the soil.

The affected firm owner would get Tk. 150 for each chicken and Tk. 5 for each egg as compensation, officials said.

Bus strike in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

An indefinite transport strike began in the southern area of the district yesterday to protest extortion at Sonapur bus terminal.

Melo Mahajon, president of Sonapur Bus-Minibus Owners Association said, a group of ruling party supporters and also transport workers had been realising illegal toll from the association for the last three months.

On Friday night, around 50-60 transport workers led by Mamun, Maruf, Nasir, Faruk, Bulet and Rahim vandalised at least 15 buses at Sonapur bus terminal. Protesting the incident, the association called an indefinite strike.

Bus services on Sonapur-Char Jabbar, Steamer Ghat, Alexander and Ramgati routes remained suspended from the morning.

Patricide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A man was killed allegedly by his son at Koigram village under Singra upzila on Friday night.

Idris Ali, 50, was hacked to death by his son Mahabub Hossain, 30, locals said. The tragic incident occurred at Koigram village under Singra upzila.

Fayezur Rahman, officer in-charge of Singra police station said, Mahabub killed his father with a sharp weapon over a family feud and went into hiding.

The Daily Star - ENGLISH FAIR More school kids learn amid fun and games

STAR NATIONAL DESK

English language fairs under English in Schools programme, a joint initiative of The Daily Star and mobile operator Robi, were held for students of five schools in Rajshahi, Khulna and Jamalpur districts yesterday.

Adcom Ltd is the creative and event partner of the fairs.

Students of Seroil Government High School and Shaheed Nazmul Haque Girls High School took part in the English language fair held at Seroil Government High School auditorium in Rajshahi, reports our Rajshahi University correspondent.

Globally renowned movie The Lion King was screened, followed by quizzes on vocabulary, situation-based question-answer, extempore speech and role play.

Students of the two schools took part in joyful interactions and watched the events based on the movie.

Eighteen students won different competitions.

Over 200 students of Godagari High School in Godagari upazila under Rajshahi district joined the English language fair at the school yesterday.

Globally renowned movie The Lion King was also screened, followed by quizzes on vocabulary, situation-based question answer, extempore speech and role play.

Our Jamalpur Correspondent reports: About 150 students of Dewanganj Government High School, Sananda Bari High School and Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills High School in Dewanganj upazila under the district took part in English language



PHOTO: STAR

Two students take part in a role play during the English language fair held at Seroil Government High School in Rajshahi city yesterday.

fair held at the government high school yesterday.

Md Amirul Islam, headmaster of Dewanganj Government High School, inaugurated the programme at 11:30am.

The fair began with the screening of The Lion King. Afterwards, quizzes on vocabulary, one-word questions, questions based on the movie, extempore speeches and role play were held.



Ten students took part in role play event while 20 others participated in the quizzes based on the movie.

"I have enjoyed the English language fair under English in Schools programme very much. I believe that such programmes will help the rural children to learn English with ease," said headmaster Amirul Islam.

Later prizes were distributed among the winners.

Our Staff Correspondent adds from Khulna: The English language fair held at

Daulatpur Mohsin Girls' High School auditorium in Khulna city saw lively participation of around 400 students of the school and Chalna Government Girls' High School under Dakope upazila of the district took part in the fair with keen interest.

The programme began with the screening of the movie The Lion King which was followed by competitions on vocabulary, extempore speech, role play and moral lessons.

Students also entertained the audience by reciting poems, telling jokes and singing songs.

Ranjit Kumar Biswas, headmaster of Mohsin Girls' High School, inaugurated the fair and later distributed prizes among winners.

Aiming to promote English language learning among school students across the country, The Daily Star in cooperation with Robi undertook English in Schools programme in 2009.

Under the initiative, each of one thousand schools selected from 64 districts of the country receives three complimentary copies of The Daily Star five days a week.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Dewanganj Government High School, Sananda Bari High School and Zeal Bangla Mills High School in Jamalpur district, who won different events at the English language fair held at the government school, pose with their teachers.