



PHOTO: STAR

This canal, serving as the main drainage passage of Kalapara town in Patuakhali district, is under threat as encroachers have continued building illegal structures there.

## Canal, sweet water pond grabbed in Kalapara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Local influential people on Sunday started building at least 10 structures on an important canal flowing through Kalapara town, adding to over 100 such illegal structures on both sides of the canal.

Besides, a sweet water pond, used for washing, bathing and household purposes by locals, especially the Rakhain community people, at Kalachandpara in Kuakata area, is under threat as an influential person is constructing concrete structures on it.

A canal flowing from nearby Andharmanik River to Kalapara town and passing beside local Rural Electrification Board and Water Development Board offices serves as an important drainage canal but gradual encroachment is squeezing it.

A few people including Rafiqul Islam, Al Amin, Lal Chand, Ripon Biswas and Sajib, all of Office Moholla area, started building temporary structures on the canal on Sunday morning.

They are constructing at least 10 establishments on the canal.

Rafiqul Islam, who is building a tin-shed house

there, said, "I am building a tin-shed house to set up a poultry farm here and I have valid paper of the land.

But he did not reply when this correspondent asked him if it was his own land or he took lease from the authority.

"Many others are constructing structures after grabbing the canal. And so, I am also building a structure here," said Lal Chand.

A few other grabbers declined to make any comments.

When contacted, Md Abdul Awal, assistant commissioner of land in Kalapara, said, "After hearing the news I sent a tahshilder from my office and asked him to stop all construction works on the canal. We will take lawful step against grabbers."

"The canal helps us to keep the town clean but influential people are occupying it day by day. Authorities should take immediate step to remove all illegal structures from the canal considering its importance," said a local resident seeking anonymity.

At Kalachandpara in Kuakata area, local people, especially those from the Rakhain community, use clean water from a khas pond for bathing and washing for long but influential

people have started grabbing it too.

Although Patuakhali Zila Parishad (district council) is owner of the pond, an influential man has already built permanent structures on it, making the sweet water source narrow and dirty.

Moncho Talukder, a Rakhaine, took lease of the pond from the zila parishad to cultivate fish there but influential people are encroaching upon the pond.

Usueya Howlader, 70, a Rakhain community leader, said they urged the local administration to save the pond from influential grabbers but to no effect.

"The lone road (entrance path) that linked Kalachandpara with the nearby pavement road has been encroached while shops have been built on both sides of the path. Wholesale fish markets, locally called arat, have been built by grabbing our land beside Shibbaria River," he added.

When contacted, Khan Mosharrif Hossain, chairman of Patuakhali Zila Parishad, said, "We are taking step to stop construction of illegal structures on our land. We will also take step to remove all illegal establishments to recover the lands."

## Three alleged killers of schoolteacher arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police yesterday arrested three people in connection with the killing of a schoolteacher in Dudhiabari village under Pirganj upazila of the district on May 3.

The arrestees are Kamruzzaman Manik, 30, son of Shawkat Hossain of Tajpur village under Sadullapur upazila, Rubel, 28, son of Ansar Ali of Sardarpara village, and Shafiqul Islam Sujan, 27, son of Salimuddin of Osmanpur village in Pirganj upazila.

Hasan Shamim Iqbal, officer-in-charge of Pirganj Police Station, said they arrested the three from Dudhiabari village and Pakarmatha area in the upazila.

During preliminary interrogation, the arrestees admitted to killing schoolteacher Enamul Haque, also a brick kiln owner, police said.

Enamul Haque, assistant teacher of Vhimshahar Pilot High School in Pirganj upazila, was killed by a gang of criminals while he was returning home at Dudhiabari village from his business establishment AH Brick Kiln riding a motorbike on the night of May 3.

Police recovered his body from a maize field at Dudhiabari the following day. Enamul family filed a case with Pirganj Police Station the same day.

Police said the three are also accused in a number of criminal cases filed with different police stations in Rangpur and Gaibandha district.

## OBJECTION FROM BSF

# Construction of Teesta channel dyke stalled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Construction of a flood control embankment on a newly emerged channel of the Teesta River inside Bangladesh territory of Dimla upazila near Indian border has been suspended due to objection from the Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

The embankment is seen as crucial for saving from flooding and erosion several thousand hectares of croplands and homesteads in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari and Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat district in the coming rainy season.

At a flag meeting held at Char Kharibari village of Tapa Kharibari union of Dimla upazila near the construction site on Monday morning BSF asked BGB to take step to stop the construction, claiming that the embankment was being constructed on 'no man's land', said Nayeab Subedar Md Mohsin, commander of Char Kharibari border operational post (BOP)

under 7 BGB Battalion.

"Then in presence of BSF the BGB team arranged a practical survey that showed the site was inside Bangladesh territory, not on no man's land. But BSF men asked BGB to stop the work for three days, saying that they needed to discuss the matter with their higher authorities. Consequently, the work stopped after the flag meeting," he added.

Earlier on April 17, at a sector commander level flag meeting held at local Thengjara Habibur Rahman High School premises, BSF assured their Bangladesh counterpart of cooperation regarding construction of the embankment, said BGB and localsources.

"Following the assurance, the union parishad took decision to start construction of the protection embankment on the channel under food for work programme. But as soon as the work started on May 5, BSF men in three vehicles reached near border pillar No 798 and put objection to the work, claiming that it

was being done on no man's land," said Rabiul Islam Shaheen, chairman of concerned Tapa Kharibari union parishad.

"Later BGB and BSF men jointly marked a point to start the work and we started the work accordingly. But BSF again put their objection on Monday's flag meeting, resulting in stoppage of the work," he said.

The earthen protection embankment was supposed to be 1300 feet long, 15 feet wide and 4 feet high.

Saiful Islam, UP member of ward No-1 comprising Char Kharibari village, informed that in order to control flood and river erosion caused by Teesta River, India built an embankment at its Andaram Kuchlibari village of Cooch Behar district very close to the border opposite to Char Kharibari village a few years ago.

Consequently, erosion by river inside Bangladesh accelerated and a new channel developed at Char Kharibari village. In the rainy season last year, the

new channel got about 150 feet wide and four feet deep and proceeded about 10 kilometres through 5-6 villages of Dimla and Hatibandha upazilas. It caused massive erosion and damaged crops on thousands of hectares of land.

If the newly emerged channel of the Teesta cannot be controlled immediately, it might turn into the main course of the river, making the existing Teesta barrage ineffective, said Moinuddin Mondal, sub divisional engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) in Dalia Division.

"BWDB has prepared a Tk 10.5 crore project for river protection work through controlling the new channel and sent it to the higher authorities for approval. But the project seems uncertain due to frequent objection by BSF. Meanwhile, the local union parishad initiated the work for constructing the earthen embankment under food for work programme as a temporary measure," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Work on the construction of a flood control embankment on a newly emerged channel of the Teesta River at Char Kharibari village in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari district started on Monday; but the work inside Bangladesh territory had to be stopped shortly afterwards in the face of serious objection by the Indian Border Security Force.

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