



PHOTO: STAR

Vehicles continue to use the badly damaged Hamidpur bridge on Tangail-Mymensingh highway in Ghatail upazila of Tangail, amid risk of a fatal accident anytime.

Two shaky bridges remain death traps for long

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A large number of vehicles including passenger buses and goods-laden trucks use dilapidated Pouli Bridge near Elega in Kalihati upazila and Hamidpur Bridge in Ghatail upazila, posing risk of fatal accident anytime.

Pouli Bridge connects Bangabandhu Bridge over the Jamuna River and Hamidpur Bridge is on Tangail-Mymensingh route.

The bridges shake when vehicles pass, said Nuru Miah, a bus driver of Binimoy Paribahan in Tangail.

The Pouli Bridge, constructed over Pouli River at Elega in 1964, saw unusual pressure of vehicles after construction of Bangabandhu Bridge over the Jamuna River in 1998, said Roads and Highways Department (RHD) officials in Tangail.

Now around 15,000 heavy and light vehicles of 21 routes including 16 districts of northern region and five districts of greater Mymensingh area use the broken bridge daily, said sources of RHD and Gorai highway police.

The pressure of vehicles on the narrow highway doubles before the Eid, they added.

Seventeen people were killed and

many others injured when a passenger bus fell into the river after breaking the railing of the bridge a few years ago, said Suruj Miah and Sirajuddin of Pouli area.

The deck slabs and girders of the old bridge have also remained in bad conditions for long, they said, adding that often miles-long tailback of hundreds of vehicles is created on sides of the bridge as vehicles have to move very slowly on the bridge.

Vehicles movement on the bridge got suspended after a deck slab collapsed in 2008.

Later, the broken bridge was repaired with the help of army men, sources said.

Following directions of Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, RHD constructed a Bailey bridge beside Pouli Bridge at a cost of Tk 2 crore 70 lakh to reduce pressure of vehicles and the Bailey bridge was opened on February 17, officials said.

The minister also directed the authorities concerned to reconstruct Pouli Bridge as soon as possible.

Hundreds of vehicles also take risky journey on 52-year-old Hamidpur Bridge over Jhinai River on Tangail-Mymensingh road.

A big part of the railing of the bridge broke long ago while its deck slabs and girders have remained in bad conditions for long, sources said.

A few months ago, procedure to reconstruct Pouli and Hamidpur bridges and five other bridges from Tangail to Dhanbari upazila started under the Eastern Bangladesh Bridge Project with the finance of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and a foreign construction firm under the joint venture with a local firm had got the work orders, RHD sources said.

The procedure, however, stopped after it became known that the foreign firm was bankrupt, they said.

Recently the Bangladeshi partner of the joint venture filed a writ petition with the High Court, saying that they have ability to complete the work without the partnership of the foreign firm.

When contacted, Shawkat Ali, executive engineer of Tangail RHD, said,

"The High court has already rejected prayer of the petitioner and after that the purchase committee of the ministry has approved to give the work to the second lowest bidder, Meer Akter Construction Firm. The bridge reconstruction work is likely to start within one month."

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Netrakona

A pall of gloom descended Humayun Ahmed's birthplace Kutubpur village in Kendua upazila under the district, as the news of the legendary writer's death reached the area.

During a visit to Kutubpur village on Friday noon, this correspondent talked to Humayun Ahmed's relatives and locals.

He established a high school named Shaheed Smriti Bidyapith at Kutubpur in memory of his father Fayzur Rahman Ahmed, who was martyred in the hand of the Pakistan occupation army during the Liberation War in 1971. Fayzur Rahman was a police officer at the time.

Humayun also established a library named Shaheed Fayzur Rahman Smriti Pathagar at Kutubpur.

"Humayun Ahmed dreamed of developing the school and increase its accommodation facilities for a large number of students of Kutubpur village and adjoining areas. He also wished to establish several welfare

organisations including a hospital at the village," said Mohammad Asaduzzaman, headmaster of the school.

But much of his dream remained unfulfilled due to his untimely demise, he said.

"I urge Humayun's

Humayun's birthplace and some of his dreams



STAR: FILE PHOTO

Humayun Ahmed among students of Shaheed Smriti Bidyapith, established in memory of his Liberation War martyr father Fayzur Rahman Ahmed, at Kutubpur village in Kendua upazila under Netrakona district. The immensely popular writer used to manage time out of his busy schedule to visit the school at his native village.

brothers to bury him at their family graveyard at Kutubpur," said Altafur Rahman, uncle of the deceased writer, with tears rolling down his eyes.

Authorities of Shaheed Smriti Bidyapith hoisted a black flag atop the school

building and announced a three-day programme to mourn the death of the popular writer.

A mourning procession was brought out under the banner of Netrakona Samajik O Sangskritik Sangathan in Netrakona town on Friday evening.

An immensely popular novelist and dramatist, Humayun Ahmed also gained fame as a filmmaker, and took to painting during later years of his life.

Humayun Ahmed was born at Kutubpur village on November 13 in 1948 and died while undergoing treatment for cancer at a hospital in New York at 11:20pm [Bangladesh time] on Thursday.



PHOTO: STAR

Black flag flies atop Shaheed Smriti Bidyapith at Kutubpur village, the birthplace of Humayun Ahmed yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

A flood-hit family in knee-deep water at Khuniyagachh village in Sadar upazila of Lalmonirhat, inset, a flood victim who took shelter on an embankment at Shulkur Bazar in Panchgachhi union of Kurigram, dries paddy in the sun.

Rain triggers flood in Rangpur

Situation worsens in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Heavy rain and onrush of water from the upstream triggered flash flood in Rangpur while thousands became marooned as more areas went under flood water in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts yesterday.

More than 50,000 people of Teesta and Jamuneswari river basin area in four upazilas of Rangpur were marooned while several hundred families rendered homeless as low lying areas of the district went under water due to heavy rain and onrush of water from across the border.

The affected upazilas are Gangachara, Kaunia, Pargachha and Mithapukur, reports our correspondent.

In Gangachara, 27 char villages were flooded. Twenty thousand people of 6,000 families in the upazila became marooned and hundreds of dwelling houses were damaged in the villages.

Most of the houses in the 27 villages have gone under 2-3 feet water. The people are suffering from food and drinking water, victims said.

Foysal Hasan, chairman of Laksmitari union said the flood water was rising fast and the Gangachara-Mohipur cross dam may collapse anytime.

Over a thousand people of 20 villages under Kaunia upazila were also marooned.

In Pargachha, flash flood hit about 15,000 people of six char areas and 12 villages of Chaola and Tambulpur unions.

At least 200 meters of Teesta cross dam at Shibdeb point went into the river in the last couple of days.

In Mithapukur, at least 100 families of Ucha village lost their homesteads due to the erosion by River Jamuneswari in the last couple of days.

While visiting the area, this correspondent found that erosion took an alarming turn from Khoyerbari to Hachia village of Baluya Masimpur union.

To protect the erosion, piling was done last year with wood and bamboo. But the whole thing has been damaged again this year.

In Lalmonirhat, around 50,000 people at 50 villages were marooned again in the last two days, reports our correspondent.

The water levels of Teesta and Dharla increased suddenly on Friday evening as all the gates at Gojoldoba Barrage in India were kept open, sources at WDB here said.

Flood hit Monowar Hossain, 65, of

Rajpur village in Sadar upazila said, thousands of people living in Teesta river basin villages were marooned as flash flood hit the areas for the third time on Saturday.

Commerce Minister GM Quader MP visited some flood affected areas in Khuniyagachh and Rajpur unions on Saturday. He distributed relief materials, including rice, among 1000 families.

Flood situation in Kurigram also deteriorated as all the rivers marked rise. The Dharla, Teesta, Dudhkumar and Brahmaputra were flowing near their respective danger levels yesterday.

Erosion also rendered homeless at least 110 families in seven unions under three upazilas in the last couple of days, reports our correspondent.

Official sources said, around 2.5 lakh people of over 1.3 lakh families in all nine upazilas have been marooned by the fresh flood.

Chairman of Hatia union Md Abul Hossen said, most of about 8,000 people of about 1,900 families in Char Gaburjan, Char Dagerkuti, Char Rumkhana and Char Gujimari villages in the union have been marooned by the second round flash flood.

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*** Washing machines: <Model> NA-149V23 <Testing Institution> T3V (Inland) (Changsha) <Test Condition> "Daily Wash" programme - Up to an additional 45% energy savings - Comparison made with ECONAVI operation (clothes amount: 2kg/water temperature: more than 35°C) against operation without ECONAVI (clothes amount: 8kg/water temperature: less than 25°C) - Test was conducted based on IEC60456 other than water temperature.

* Air-conditioners: Up to 50% energy savings on top of ECONAVI - Comparison of 1.5HP Inverter model (Cooling, Outside temperature: 35°C/24°C). Remote setting temperature: 25°C with Fan Speed (High). Vertical Airflow Direction: Auto, Horizontal Airflow Direction: Front. Total power consumption amount is measured for 8 hours from start at Panasonic Amenity Room (size: 16.6m²). This is the maximum energy savings value, and the effect differs according to conditions in installation and usage. Refrigerators: Up to 40% energy savings on top of ECONAVI - Comparison between Inverter Compressor and Conventional Compressor with the same refrigerator and freezer compartment capacity. Washing machines: Up to 50% energy savings on top of ECONAVI - Comparison between NA-FS series Inverter model and Non-Inverter model.

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