



PHOTO: STAR

As repeated appeals by the locals to the authorities fell on deaf ears, the youths of Raghobpur village in Gaibandha finally joined hands to build this 70-foot-long bamboo bridge, much to the relief of the people of 10 neighbouring villages.

## Job befitting the youths brings relief for locals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Construction of a wooden bridge over Raghobpur canal in Gobindaganj upazila under the district has come as a relief for people of ten villages, thanks to the initiative of a group of young people belonging to Nature and Environment Preservation Organisation (NEPO), a local voluntary organisation.

Locals including the people of Uttarpara, Shampur, Raghobpur, Noondahapara, Fakirpara, Sonarpara villages had been facing problems to go to upazila and union parishad offices, educational institutions and markets as the concrete bridge over the canal collapsed during the flood in 1987.

In the rainy season people had to take risky ride on banana tree rafts to cross the canal or move additional five-kilometre road to reach the destinations, said locals, adding that despite their repeated appeal authorities did not construct a concrete bridge there.

Finally the members of Nature and Environment Preservation Organisation took initiative to set up a wooden bridge to help smooth communication in the area.

Solvent people provided wood, bamboo and other materials while others provided physical labour to complete the

70-foot-long bridge in a short time.

Starting the work on August 12, they completed its construction on August 19.

"We had to cover additional five kilometres to carry paddy, jute and other agricultural products to the market. Now the bridge has reduced our suffering," said Mojibar Rahman, a farmer of Raghobpur village.

"We are thankful to the young group who took initiative to build the bridge that helps us to go to destinations with ease," said Abdul Mottalib, assistant teacher of Taluk Kanupur High School.

However, a permanent bridge over the canal has remained a longstanding demand of local people, said Mohsin Ali, chairman of Taluk Kanupur union.

"We have already forwarded a proposal for construction of a concrete bridge across the canal," said Gobindaganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer MA Wahed.

Ahmed Ullah, president of NEPO, said the voluntary organisation works for preservation of environment, including tree plantation and making safe shelters for local and wild birds, and renovation of damaged roads.

This year the organisation received 'national environment award' in recognition to its social welfare and environment-friendly works, he added.

## 4 suicides, 6 attempts

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Four people allegedly committed suicide in Jessore and Tangail districts while six others attempted to kill themselves in Chuadanga on Friday.

In Jessore, two young men killed themselves in separate incidents in Bagharpara and Monirampur upazilas, reports UNB.

Police said Billal Hossain, 22, of Naldanga village in Bagharpara upazila, took poison at about 6:30pm when his fiancée of neighboring Khetrapala village refused his marriage proposal.

Billal was rushed to the upazila health complex where the doctors declared him dead.

In Monirampur, Bhakta Boiragi, 15, son of late Sodananda Boiragi of Champakona village, took his life by hanging himself from the ceiling of his room at midnight.

Family sources said Bhakta committed suicide following a quarrel with his mother.

According to our Tangail correspondent, a housewife and a youth allegedly committed suicide in Bhuapur and Mirzapur upazilas on Friday night.

The deceased were Renu Begum, 35, wife of Abul Kalam of Agdhalla village in Mirzapur upazila and Rafiqul Islam, 25, son of Rohiz Uddin of Beltia village in Bhuapur upazila.

The reason behind the suicides could not be known immediately, said police.

Renu took her life by hanging herself from the ceiling of her in-law's house, said locals.

Rafiqul hanged himself from the ceiling of his room.

Police recovered the bodies from the spot yesterday morning and sent them to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

In Chuadanga, six people, including a schoolgirl, took poison and sleeping pills in a bid to commit 'suicide' in different areas of the district on Friday.

They were rushed to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital, reports our Kushtia correspondent.

According to the hospital sources, Juthi Khatun, 16, daughter of Abdul Wahab of Masjidpara area in the town, took an overdose of sleeping pills and fell seriously ill in the afternoon.

She was rushed to the hospital and then shifted to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital as her condition deteriorated.

Bappiul Alam alias Bappi, 22, son of Selim Uddin of Rnayatpur village in Alamdanga upazila, took poison following an altercation with his wife in the morning.

Shamsunnahar, 24, wife of Montu Mia of Solua village in Sadar upazila, attempted to kill herself by taking poison following a family feud in the morning.

Lipi Khatun, 19, wife of Shariful Islam of Jalsuka village in Sadar upazila, took poison after her husband beat her up following a family dispute at noon.

Nifa Khatun, 13, daughter of Nur Islam and student of class nine, took poison in a bid to commit 'suicide' at noon.

Selina Khatun, 32, wife of Anarul Islam of Gholdari in Sadar upazila, took poison, following a quarrel with her husband, said family members.

## Robbers injure fishermen

A CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Four fishermen were injured as robbers opened fire on them in Shanashir Char area near Kobotakh Petrol Range office in west Sundarbans on Friday night.

Sajjad Gazi, father of one of injured, Bappi of Pathakhali village in Shyamnagar upazila, said his son along with five other fishermen went to the area after taking permission from Buri Goalini station.

At one stage, the gang belonging to 'Azad Bahini' in an engine boat chased the six and opened fire, leaving four of them injured at around 10:00 pm in a canal, he added.

## BITTER RETURN FROM SWEET HOME



Return journey to the capital and other places after spending the Eid holiday in village homes turns even more troublesome due to shortage of transport coupled with anxiety about timely arrival at workplaces. The photos, from top, show dangerous ride on train roofs and engines at Mymensingh railway station, people getting on the roof of a bus to travel for 'cheaper' fair at Paturia ferry terminal in Manikganj district, and a passenger fell to the river while trying to jump onto a launch at Patuakhali. Around 5,000 people returned frustrated from Patuakhali launch terminal yesterday as five double-decker launches starting from there for Dhaka proved too inadequate for a huge number of passengers.

PHOTO: STAR



## 107 shops, 31 houses gutted in Patuakhali fire; 35 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A devastating fire gutted at least 107 business establishments and 31 dwelling houses at Kalishuri bazaar under Baulf upazila on Friday night.

Thirty-five people, including three firemen were injured while fighting the 4-hour-long fire.

Six fire service units from Baulf, Patuakhali and Amtali brought the fire under control at 12.30am, Abdul Khaleq, officer of Baulf fire station said.

The fire completely gutted 25 cloth shops, 20 hardware shops, 20 cosmetic shops, 15 groceries, 5 electrical shops, 6 shoes stores, 7 tailoring shops, two book shops, 3 restaurants, 2 fuel shops, 2 mobile phone shops and 31 dwelling houses.

Fire service and upazila administration sources said, the fire originated from an electrical short circuit at an electrical shop owned by one Harun and soon spread to the adjacent shops and dwellings. There were over 1000 various business establishments in the 100-year-old bazaar.

On information, fire service men from Baulf upazila town rushed to the spot. As it was not enough to control the fire, the upazila administration sought help of Patuakhali and nearby Amtali upazila fire units.

The extent of damage was very high as the shops were too close to each other, local UP chairman Anwar Hossain Bachchu said.

Goods and assets worth Tk 50 crore were damaged by the fire, said UNO of Baulf Mrinal Kanti Da.

"We will seek aid from the authorities to rehabilitate the victims", he said.

In Laxmipur, at least 12 shops were gutted in a fire which broke out at the Municipal Hawkers' Market in the town yesterday morning.

Fire service sources said, the fire broke out at a shop of the market around 6 am and

soon engulfed the adjoining shops.

The reason behind the fire could not be known immediately, reports UNB.

On information, two fire fighting units from Laxmipur Sadar and Begumganj upazila headquarters of Noakhali district rushed in and extinguished the flame after two hours of hectic efforts with the help of local people.

The affected shop owners claimed that the extent of loss from the fire could go up to Tk 5 crore.

In Narsingdi, seven houses were gutted in a

devastating fire in Paschim Kandhir Para area of the district town on Wednesday night, reports our correspondent.

Locals said the fire originated from a gas riser at about 10:30pm and quickly spread to the adjoining houses.

On information, three units of Narshingdi fire service reached the spot and brought the fire under control after an hour long effort.

The affected families claimed that the damage caused by the fire would be around Tk 20 lakh.



A man tries to retrieve items from his shop gutted in a devastating fire at Kalishuri bazaar in Baulf upazila of Patuakhali on Friday night. The fire burnt to ashes at least 106 other shops and 31 dwelling houses. PHOTO: STAR



FILE PHOTO: STAR

## REMEMBERING A TRAGEDY

National Committee for Protection of Oil, Gas, Mineral, Power and Port will observe 'black day' and National Resources Protection Day today. On this day (August 26) in 2006, three people were shot dead, 50 bullet-hit, and 200 others injured in baton charge when law enforcers turned brutal on the agitators who joined a gathering to besiege the office of Asia Energy in Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur district protesting the planned open pit mining by Asia Energy. Thousands of people from different upazilas of Dinajpur joined the programme organised by the 'national committee' demanding cancellation of the open pit mining that would damage thousands of hectares of arable land and cause environmental hazard in the densely populated area. The file photo sent by our Dinajpur correspondent shows a scene of the police action against the agitators.

## Jubo League man shot dead, BCL leader stabbed

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A Jubo League man was shot dead by a gang in Jessore district on Friday night.

Away in Pabna, a Chhatra League leader was injured seriously as criminals stabbed him mercilessly.

In Jessore, Jamal Hossain, 30, was shot in the head from point blank range and stabbed in the chest in front of a restaurant at Puratan Kasba Niribili area near his home at about 6:30pm.

The Jubo League worker was rushed to Jessore Medical College and Hospital in critical condition where the on-duty doctors declared him dead, reports a correspondent.

The gang, who arrived in a microbus, managed to flee, exploding two to three bombs, said Golam Rahman, officer in-charge at Kotwali police station.

Jamal's father Abdus Salam filed a case accusing seven unidentified people yesterday morning, said the OC.

According to our Pabna correspondent, a BCL leader was stabbed by criminals in Radhanagar Rathghar area of the district town on Friday night.

Shahinur Rahman Palash, joint secretary of district unit BCL, was admitted to Pabna Medical College and Hospital in critical condition.

Police said Palash was coming to the town from Edward College premise at about 9:30pm.

When he reached the area, the gang attacked him with sharp weapons, leaving him critically injured.

Hearing the sound of firings, locals rushed in, rescued Palash and sent him to the hospital.

Protesting the incident, the BCL leaders brought out a procession in the town yesterday morning, demanding immediate arrest of the attackers. They also held a rally in this connection.

At the rally, the protesters threatened to go for a tougher programme if their demand was not met immediately.

Among others, Ahmed Sharif Dablu, president of the unit, and Mostafizur Rahman Sweet, president of Pabna Edward College unit BCL, spoke.

Md Afzal Hossain, officer in-charge at Sadar police station, said they were raiding different areas to arrest the attackers.