

KHAGRACHHARI-DIGHINALA ROAD

32 risky turnings cause of concern for vehicles

KAFIL MAHMUD, Khagrachhari
Hundreds of passenger and goods-laden vehicles daily plying Khagrachhari-Dighinala road remain vulnerable to serious accidents as there are at least 32 risky turnings on the 21-kilometre road.

During the last three years, 125 people were killed and hundreds others injured in several serious accidents on the road, said sources at Dighinala police station.

"The road sees frequent accidents as drivers face problem to see the vehicles coming from the opposite direction at the risky turn-

ings. Short width of the turnings add to the situation," bus driver Ratan Kanti Chakma said. The problem becomes more serious during the rainy season, especially for newcomers, as the abundantly growing grasses and weeds beside the road creates problem to adjust, said another bus driver Mohammad Rahman.

With gradual rise of vehicular movement, journey on the road is becoming riskier day by day, said jeep driver Binu Chakma. Earlier only jeeps, mini buses and mini trucks plied the road but now the big sized passenger buses and heavy trucks use the road, increasing the risk of serious accidents there, said truck driver Nur Mohammad.



PHOTO: STAR

Vehicles passing narrow turnings, like this one at Bhoirafa on Khagrachhari-Dighinala road in Khagrachhari district, often face accidents but authorities are yet to take any initiative to widen and straighten the portions of the road.



PHOTO: STAR

Rural women organised under Shialy Nari Palli Samaj, an initiative under women's empowerment programme of NGO Brac, rebuild this sako (makeshift bamboo-made bridge) over Kashinath canal at Dakkhin Amragachhia village in Mirzaganj upazila of Patuakhali district on Monday.

CASE FOR APR 21 VANDALISM

24 Habiganj BNP men acquitted of charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Habiganj court yesterday acquitted 24 leaders and activists of BNP and its associate bodies in a case for vandalising district council auditorium on April 21. Additional chief Judicial Magistrate Muslehuddin acquitted the BNP men for lack of evidence in support of the charges brought against them. This was one of the five cases filed with Sadar Police Station under the Speedy Trial Act on April 21.

District BNP Joint Secretary Mizanur Rahman, district Krishak Dal President Mokhesur Rahaman, district Juba Dal General Secretary Mia Mohammad Ilias, and district JCD Joint Convener Aminul Islam Babul were among the accused in the case. More than 100 BNP, Juba Dal, Krishak Dal and Chhatra Dal men were sued on the day on charges of vandalising Shilpakala Academy and public offices and attacking police during their agitation in Habiganj town to mount pressure on the government to return their 'missing' central leader Ilias Ali.

Of them, 34 were acquitted on August 8 and 40 others on August 26 in three separate cases by the same court as the prosecution failed to prove their involvement in vandalising Shilpakala Academy and public offices. The police assault case still remains pending with the court. The opposition activists locked in sporadic clashes with police after the law enforcers foiled their agitation programme in the town on April 21. They pelted brick chips on cops, Shilpakala Academy building, district council auditorium and some government offices. Abdun Nur, night guard of the district council auditorium, and police filed the cases against the BNP men the same day.

SNIPPETS

Outlaw held with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested an alleged outlaw along with a light gun (LG) and one bullet at Pabohati village in Sadar upazila early yesterday. Arrestee Monirul Islam, 35, son of Mohasin Mia of Muralidaho village, is a 'commander' of banned outfit Gono Mukti Fauj. Squadron leader Md Hamidul Haque, company commander of Jhenidah Rab, said on secret information, they arrested Monirul along with the arms while he and his cohorts were holding a secret meeting there to commit crime. However, the rest managed to flee, sensing the presence of the elite force, said Hamidul.

Body recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

Police recovered the body of Ansar Ali, associate of a slain union parishad (UP) chairman in the district, from Kathuli char area in Pabna yesterday afternoon. On Tuesday, criminals shot dead Nurul Islam, 48, chairman of Ambaria UP in Khoksa upazila, and his two associates Ansar, 43, and Bhutto, 25, of Domdom. The shooting took place on a motorboat in the Padma River when the victims were returning from Pabna at around 2:35pm. The gunmen then threw the bodies into the river. Horendranath Sarkar, officer in-charge at Khoksa police station, said fishermen found Ansar's body in the area and informed police. Earlier on Wednesday, the law enforcers arrested four people in Ambaria area of the upazila in connection with the killing of the trio. Deputy inspector general (DIG) of Mezbah Uddin Ahmed said police were raiding different areas to arrest the killers.

Quader punishes 2 at Bogra station

A CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday suspended a railway official and transferred a booking assistant while visiting the Santahar railway junction in Adamdighi upazila in the district. During his visit, the minister found surveyor Zaiul Haque Zia absent in the office as he left his desk much before his office hour was over. The minister also ordered transfer of Abdul Aziz on charge of ticket black marketing. Talking to newsmen after his visit, the minister said the railway can be made profitable within two years through hard work of all. Some corrupted and dishonest employees are hampering the development of the railway department, he said. The Railway's lands are being grabbed and leased out at nominal rates. After forming a committee with top officials, action to be taken in this regard, he said. He also assured the

people of developing the infrastructure of the Railway and increasing the number of rail engines. Members of the parliament Shadhan Chandra Mojumdar, Shahiduzzaman Sharker and Dr Akram Hossain Chowdhury, former MP of Bogra Kosim Uddin Ahmed, among others, were present. The minister, during a surprise visit to Joypurhat railway station yesterday also expressed his unhappiness at its dirty condition, reports our Dinajpur correspondent. The passengers told the minister that the railway officials in Joypurhat used to harass them in many ways. Black marketing of tickets and delayed arrival and departure of trains, dirty offices and platform are a regular feature, they said. The minister warned the officials and staff of the station and told them to strictly maintain time schedule and keep the station and its surroundings clean.

50 returned by India on expiry of 4-year jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Indian authorities yesterday returned 50 Bangladeshis to the immigration police at the land port on expiry of their four-year jail term in the neighbouring country. Md. Kamruzzaman, officer in-charge of Benapole immigration police, said 41 men, four women and five children were held in a Kashmir bordering area when they were going to Pakistan for job. In 2008, a manpower agent took Tk 20,000 from each of them, promising to send them to Pakistan by road through India, the victims said. When they reached Jammu they were held by police from a place near Pakistan border. Later they were convicted and imprisoned for four years in a Jammu jail. The returnees hailing from Feni, Cox's Bazar and Sylhet districts were sent to their village homes yesterday.

Magura AL leader, mayor's son sued on extortion charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Eight people, including the general secretary of Awami League Magura Pourasava (municipality) unit, and a son of the incumbent mayor of the municipality, have been sued on charge of extortion. Former acting mayor of the municipality Tapan Kumar filed the case with Sadar Police Station on Wednesday night. In the case statement, the complainant stated that a gang of around 15 led by pourasava AL General Secretary Mohammad Baki Imam and Mayor Mohammad Altaf Hossain's son Khurshid Haider Tutul, stormed into his house at Batikadanga in the town early Wednesday and demanded Tk 5 lakh from him. "As I refused to pay them toll, they

assaulted me and fired three blank shots" Tapan, also the organising secretary of AL district unit, alleged. Contacted, Tapan said the gang led by Baki and Tutul tried to kill him as he refused to meet their demand. Inspector (investigation) of Magura Sadar Police Station Mohammad Keramat Ali told this correspondent that they had arrested one of the accused named Shahidul Islam yesterday. The rest of the accused had gone into hiding soon after filing of the case. Police raided different areas of the district town early yesterday and also picked up at least six people from Doarpara and Mollapara areas for their alleged involvement in the attack on the former acting mayor.

Erosion by Jamuna renders 200 families homeless in Jamalpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Erosion by the Jamuna River has taken a serious turn at four villages in Chinaduli union of Islampur upazila, rendering around 200 families homeless in the last 11 days. In addition, more than 300 families face serious threat as their homesteads will be devoured anytime. The erosion victims are passing their days in misery without drinking water and foods under the open sky on roads and highways. The affected villages are Dakkhin Gilabari, Paschim Bamna, Shingbhanga and Kadomtali, said Abdus Salam, chairman of the union. The erosion sped up when the floodwater started receding, said Water Development Board (WDB) sources.

It eroded a large number of homesteads and croplands covering 4-km long and 80-meter wide along the riverbank, said Jamalpur WDB executive engineer Nizamul Haque Bhuyian. Most of the villagers left their homesteads in fear of further erosion, he said. The chairman said at least 20 homesteads at village Paschim Bamna were washed away by the river within a couple of hours on Eid day. Several hundred acres of cropland were devoured by the erosion during the period, he added. "We got only 27 metric tonnes of rice under vulnerable group feeding (VGF) programme for a large number of erosion victims", said the chairman. During a recent visit, freedom fighter Sona Mia of village Paschim

Bamna, told this correspondent that it was a bitter experience for them as they had to shift their homesteads during the festival due to the erosion. The affected villagers alleged that their homesteads and croplands were devoured as the authorities did not take any initiative to protect the 5.5 km left bank of the river despite repeated pleas. Contacted, the executive engineer said the government has already allocated Tk 115 crore to protect the riverbank from Guthail hard point to Uliya Bazar of the upazila through dumping GO bags in the upcoming dry season. Upazila nirbahi officer Anwar Hossain Akand said we have sent a letter to the higher authorities, seeking fund to tackle the situation.

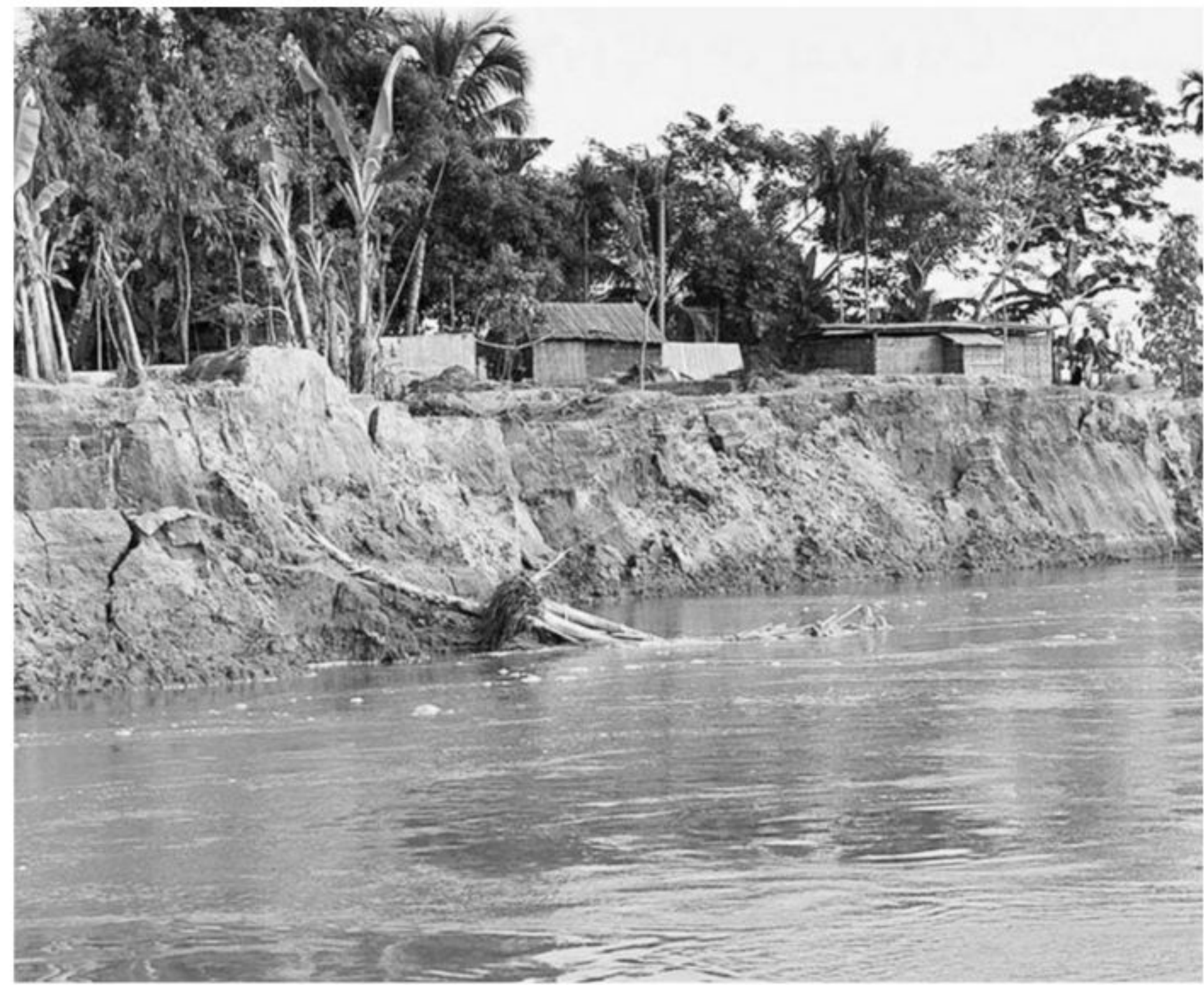


PHOTO: STAR

The river Jamuna continues to devour homesteads at Paschim (west) Bamna village in Chinaduli Union under Islampur upazila of Jamalpur. Erosion by the river has taken a serious turn in the union, leaving at least 200 families of four villages homeless in the last 11 days.

Youth beaten to death for stalking

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A youth was beaten to death by locals for stalking a schoolgirl at Pirpur village in Sadar upazila of Chuadanga on Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Abdul Aziz, 22, son of Saker Ali of Bishnupur village in the upazila. Police said Abdul Aziz sexually harassed the daughter of Asadul Haque of the village on her way to school at noon on the day. When the girl informed the matter to her family members they became angry and caught Aziz from his village and brought him to Pirpur village. There they along with local people beat up the youth mercilessly at around 3:30pm. Asadul later died at Chuadanga Sadar Hospital at 6:30pm.