

Road unfinished as minister's order goes unheeded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Renovation work on a one kilometre stretch of the 65-kilometre-long Khagrachhari-Rangamati road is yet to be finished despite verbal instruction given by the communications minister in August this year to complete the job within a week.

While visiting the area during Eid vacation, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader ordered Executive Engineer Md Ismaile Hossain of the Roads and Highways Department, Rangamati, to complete the repair work of the road within seven days.

Accordingly, the

authorities concerned gave the work order to a firm named United Construction allegedly without tendering process. The firm begun renovation work in September and completed only base-type-one work.

The road renovation work has remained suspended for the last 20 days while stones and other road construction materials are being removed from there.

Contacted, Executive Engineer Ismail Hossain said they did not give work order to United Construction owned by Md Tipu. The road repair work is being done departmentally, he added.

"It is not possible to

complete the work within a week through tendering procedure. We will soon invite tender to complete the unfinished work," said Ismail Hossain.

During a recent visit to the road, this correspondent found contractor Tipu giving instructions to the labourers who were shifting construction materials to another place. "I am collecting stone chips from here as I worked on this road earlier," Tipu said.

There is an allegation from other contractors that the authorities concerned always negotiate with Tipu and award works to United Construction.



PHOTO: STAR

Work on renovation of this portion of Rangamati-Khagrachhari road has remained suspended for the last 20 days although Communications Minister Obaidul Quader last August verbally ordered the executive engineer of Roads and Highways Department in Rangamati to complete the job within a week.



PHOTO: STAR

Jor Shimul village in Dhunat upazila under Bogra district gets flooded as the protection embankment at Chandanbaisha in the upazila collapsed due to strong current of the Jamuna River.

Floods engulf fresh areas in Bogra, 60,000 marooned

A CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Fresh areas in more than 115 villages under Sherpur, Sonatola and Dhunat upazilas were flooded yesterday and the day before, leaving over 60,000 people marooned.

Of them, 10,000 were hit in Pakulla, Modhupur and Jorgasa unions in Sonatola upazila.

The water of rivers Jamuna and Bangalee was flowing 35 and 74 centimetres above danger mark on Monday due to onrush of water from the upstream, said Water Development Board (WDB) sources.

Over 15,000 people were left marooned while crops including aman paddy, vegetables and spices on about 360 hectares of land damaged, in Sherpur upazila, agriculture officer Abdur Rahim said.

Ghoshpara of Sherpur municipality also went under floodwater, said locals.

The flood affected people are facing serious problem due to acute crisis of drinking water, foods and fodder.

They are yet to get any relief from the authorities, alleged the affected people.

However, Sonatola upazila nirbahi officer Uttam Kumar said 50,000 metric tonnes of relief goods have been allocated for the flood hit people.

Away in Dhunat, over 36 thousand people of 95 villages in Jamuna river basin were marooned by flood.

The river water was flowing 45 cm above the danger level yesterday morning.

A flood control embankment at Chandanbaisha in the upazila collapsed due to erosion, said locals. At least 47 educational institutions in the areas went underwater.

T-aman paddy, lentils, vegetables, spices, etc on about 9455 hectares of land were damaged, said upazila agriculture officer Zahangir Alam.

Another tale of brutality in the name of arbitration

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A housewife and her husband became victim of brutalities by a few locals following a so-called village arbitration that brought allegation of adultery against the woman at Shalki-Santoshpara village in Sankerpur union under Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

The victim, Nurnahar Begum, wife of Moksedur Rahman of Shalki-Santoshpara village, filed a case with Dinajpur police station accusing several people including Abdul Latif, Rafiqul Islam, Aminul Islam, Rashed Mia, Shakhawat Islam, Shafiqul Islam and Md Solaiman on Friday evening. Six to eight men including Rafiqul Islam, Aminul Islam, Rashed Mia, Shakhawat Islam and Shafiqul Islam picked up the couple from their residence on September 23 afternoon, said locals.

Afterwards, a few villagers arranged arbitration on the ground of Shalki-Santoshpara Government Primary School led by Md Abdul Latif, a member of Sankerpur union parishad (UP), locals said, adding that Aklima Begum, a woman UP member of the same ward, was also present there.

The one and a half hour long arbitration declared the woman 'guilty' and asked the members to lash the couple. The arbitration also fined her Tk 2 lakh.

"Then they confined me and my husband to a room of the school and lashed us, tying our hands and legs. Early morning, the members of the arbitration let my

husband go, but continued torturing me there, keeping me at the school room," said the victim woman.

"They beat me with bamboo sticks. Rafiqul Islam and Md Solaiman cut my hair in presence of public on Monday (Sept 24) as punishment for failure to pay off Tk 2 lakh fine. Then they reduced the fine to Tk 30,000 and sternly asked me to pay the amount within 24 hours. As we failed, the arbitration members took away two cattle from our house and kept those at the house of Md Shahidul Islam upon instruction of Abdul Latif. As the incident became known in the area on Thursday, they returned our cattle," said the woman.

"They tortured us in name of rural arbitration, claiming that they saw a man of the area enter our house compound on the night of September 22," said Nurnahar's husband Moksedur Rahman.

Contacted, UP member Abdul Latif admitted that he was present at the arbitration.

He, however, claimed that there was no decision to beat the woman or cut her hair.

Despite several attempts, this correspondent failed to contact UP member Aklima Begum as nobody received the call made to her cell phone.

Md Aslam Iqbal, officer in charge of Dinajpur police station, confirmed the incident of village arbitration and torture on the couple.

"But we could not arrest any of the accused in the case," he said.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Robbers kill fisherman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Robbers swooped on a trawler on the Bay early yesterday, killing a fisherman and injuring two others. The dead is Abul Kalam, 50, of Rasulpur village under Shashibhusion upazila in Bhola while the injured are Abdul Hai, 30, of Rasulpur village, and Mofiz, 40, of Jahanpur village under the same upazila. Masuduzzaman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Rangabali Police Station, said a gang of robbers attacked the fishermen when they were fishing in the Bay, over 100-Km south of Kuakata, at around 4:00am. Kalam died on the spot. Police recovered the body and sent it to Patuakhali Hospital morgue to autopsy. The injured fishermen returned home after receiving treatment at a private clinic.

Tk 1.5 cr Indian clothes seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Customs officials seized Indian cloths worth Tk 1.5 crore at Benapole Port yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, a team of preventive officers of Benapole customs conducted a drive in the port area at around 10:30am and seized a truck loaded with Indian clothes in shed No 42. Sensing the presence of the preventive officers, driver and helper of the truck fled the scene.



PHOTO: STAR

Sacked workers of two garment factories of Ishwardi Export Processing Zone (EPZ) stage a daylong hunger strike at Mahub Ahmed Khan Smriti Mancho in Ishwardi yesterday demanding their reinstatement. Around 291 workers of Roshita Knitting Limited and MeghaTextile Limited were terminated in February this year for holding demonstrations inside the RMG units to press their demand for wage hike and annual bonus.

BNP INTRA-PARTY CLASHES

19 get bail in Pabna, 250 sued in Sherpur

UNB, Sherpur

Two separate cases were filed on Monday against 250 BNP men in connection with the previous day's clash between two rival groups of BNP in the district town.

Akram Hossain, officer in-charge of Sadar PS said BNP chairperson's advisor and former secretary Barrister M Haider Ali, who was injured in the clash, filed an attempted murder case, accusing 38 identified and over 100 unidentified BNP men with the police station.

Sadar PS sub-inspector Mohammad Ansar Ali filed another case against 35 known and over 100 unidentified people on charge of obstructing police while performing their duties and creating panic among people through vandalism.

Local BNP leader Fahim Chowdhury, son of former Whip Zahed Ali Chowdhury, district BNP vice-president Fazlul Haque Badshah, city BNP president Fazlul Rahman Tara, convener of district Jubo Dal Shafiqul Islam Masud were among the accused.

Twenty people, including Barrister M Haider Ali, were injured in a clash between two rival groups of

BNP during a protest meeting of BNP-led 18-party alliance in Khorompur Natun Bazar area in the town on Sunday.

Police fired 22 bullets, 17 rounds tear of gas shells to bring the situation under control. Seventeen BNP leaders and activists were arrested in this connection.

In Pabna, 19 out of 26 BNP leaders and activists yesterday got bail in a case filed by police following an intra-party clash in the district on September 24, reports our correspondent.

The bails were granted for Abdus Samad Khan Montu, Abdullah Al Mahamud, Toufik Habib, A K M M u s a , N u r Mohammad Masum Boga and others.

Earlier, advocate Zainul Abedin & associates, a law firm, prayed for anticipatory bail of the accused.

Five separate cases including one by police, were filed against BNP activists following an intra-party clash at the district headquarters on September, 24 which left one dead, and 20 others injured.

President of district BNP KS Mahamud and secretary Habibur Rahman Tota were arrested on September 25 in connection with the clash.

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