

Hearts throb in fear as vehicles cross two worn out bridges

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Hundreds of vehicles including heavy ones cross two worn out bridges on Tangail-Aricha road in Tangail Sadar and Delduar upazilas amid risk as construction works of two new bridges beside them is being delayed about two years.

Besides, roads on the either sides of the narrow bridges often see traffic jams, much to the sufferings of thousands of passengers.

Following tender, local construction firm Lauhajang Enterprise on February 1 in 2010 got work orders to construct two new bridges beside the old ones - Kagmari Bridge in Tangail Sadar upazila and Hinganagar Bridge in Delduar upazila by January 31 in 2011, said sources of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in Tangail.

The works for construction of 48.80-metre-long Kagmari Bridge and 92.97-metre-long Hinganagar



PHOTO: STAR

Vehicles cross the worn out Hinganagar, left, and Kagmari bridges on Tangail-Aricha road in Delduar and Sadar upazilas of Tangail amid risk as the under construction bridges beside them have remained unfinished for about two years.

Bridge started in time, but the contractor stopped the works in the midway due to fund crisis, RHD sources said.

The estimated costs for the two bridges were Tk 4 crore and 5 crore.

During visit to the areas a few days ago, this correspondent saw vehicles plying the two worn out bridges amid risk.

"During the Liberation War, local freedom fighters blew up Hinganagar Bridge to disrupt movement of the Pakistani occupation forces. It was repaired after the independence but later became very risky due to long use," said Shankar De of Hinganagar village in Delduar upazila.

"We get panicked when our college bus crosses the 50-year-old and worn out Kagmari Bridge on the Lauhajang River," said Mahmudul Hassan, a student of Government MM Ali College at Kagmari.

"We have already resumed the work of Kagmari Bridge after getting partial payment of

the bill recently. The work of Hinganagar Bridge could not be resumed due to lack of necessary technicians. It is likely to resume within a couple of days," said Shawkat Reza, owner of Lauhajang Enterprise.

"The works of Kagmari Bridge may complete within next two months and Hinganagar Bridge within

six months," he added.

Admitting delay in construction of the two new bridges due to fund crisis, Mohammad Shawkat Ali, executive engineer of RHD in Tangail, said, "We have got the required fund recently and reminded the contractor to complete the two bridges in a short time."

Youth's body recovered from school's water tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Police recovered the body of a youth from a water tank at a primary school in Brahmandi village under Sadar upazila on Monday night.

The victim was identified as Delwar Hossain Molla, 25, son of Harun-or-Rashid Molla of the same village.

Police and family sources said Delwar went missing after he came out of his house three days ago. After a hectic search, police recovered his body on Monday night.

Police said that Delwar might have been killed over previous enmity.

Md Moniruzzaman, officer in-charge (OC) of Sadar police station said there were several cases, including for robbery, against Delwar with Naria in Shariatpur and Sadar police station in Madaripur.

MAGURA NGO WORKER

Away in Magura, body of an NGO (non-governmental organisation) worker was recovered from Doarpara area in the town, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Mustafizur Rahman Mallick, 30, son of Waliur Rahman Mallick of Doarpara in the municipality area.

Police quoting the family members said that Mustafiz was a worker of Ehsan society, a Magura-based NGO. He went out of his house in the afternoon on Monday and since did not return home.

On information, his body was recovered yesterday from near a waterbody in the same area.

Police, however, could not confirm the cause of his death till writing of this report at 2.00pm yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Two women take care of their cattle amid shivering cold at Boruya village under Kulaghat union in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

Early winter adds to woes of char people

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Early arrival of winter this year has come as an added woe to the poor people, especially those living in remote char (landmass emerged from riverbed) areas of five upazilas in Lalmonirhat district.

Usually the winter comes at the end of November or early December but this year the chilly weather engulfed the area in the first week of November, locals said.

Unable to purchase warm clothes, even second hand ones, the poor people have to bear the brunt of the biting cold, especially during the night and morning.

The helpless people are now crying for help from the government or non-government organisations.

Rahat Ali, 48, a day labourer at Kalmati Char village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said, "I daily earn Tk 130 to 150 which is spent to maintain my five-member family. I have no money to purchase warm clothes and it becomes difficult to go out for work in the morning due to the cold."

"People like me, who live hand to mouth in char areas, are facing untold sufferings due to early arrival of winter this year," he said.

"The winter makes my life miserable. I have no warm clothes, and so, I tremble in cold, especially at night. I have to beg for livelihood but I can't go out for the purpose

in the morning due to severe cold during the last two weeks," said Rozina Bewa, 65, a resident of Char Bowalmari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

Azizar Rahman, 50, a farmer of Rudreshwar village in Kaliganj upazila, said labourers cannot join their work before 10:00am and they go back home before 5:00pm due to the cold as many of the day labourers have no warm clothes.

"Poor people are badly suffering due to cold. Aged people and children are the worst victims of the early winter in the district. Many people from char villages in my union crowd my home and office for warm clothes but I cannot do anything for them," said Mofazzol Hossain Mofa, chairman of Rajpur union parishad.

Idris Ali, chairman of Kulaghat union parishad in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said low income people like day labourers and rickshaw-pullers cannot go out early in the morning for work due to the cold.

Lalmonirhat District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Anwarul Islam said the ministry concerned is yet to give any allocation for warm clothes to distribute among the distressed people.

"Generally the allocation is made during the second half of December but the winter has arrived early this time. I will distribute warm clothes among the needy people if the allocation is made soon," he said.

Agitation at IU on for removal of VC, 2 others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

Teachers at Islamic University (IU) continued their agitation yesterday, demanding removal of VC, Pro-VC and Treasurer.

At least 35 teachers held a peaceful sit-in on the university campus for over two hours in the morning.

The sit-in saw a spontaneous discussion chaired by IUTA president prof Yakub Ali.

It was addressed, among others, by IUTA general Secretary prof. ASM Tariqul Islam, IU unit Bangabandhu Parishad president prof Abul Ahsan Choudhury, general secretary prof Ruhul Kuddus Saleh and former general secretary prof Mahbubur Rahman, Dean of Law Faculty prof Sahjahan Mondol, Dean of Business Faculty prof Mizanur Rahman, former IUTA president prof Mainur Rahman and prof Makhluqur Rahman and Zia Parishad president prof Alinur Rahman.

The teachers told the sit-in that they were compelled to boycott classes and examinations.

"We had no alternative to saving the university from these corrupt VC, Pro-VC and Treasurer," prof. Yakub said.

He alleged that the VC

appointed his underqualified daughter as lecturer depriving the competent candidates besides giving jobs to around 12 relatives. The Pro-VC also gave jobs to several relatives while the Treasurer appointed his son-in-law and at least three staffs at the university.

"We urge the government to investigate the alleged recruitment scam properly," said IU unit Bangabandhu Parishad president prof Abul Ahsan Choudhury.

Prof Ahsan also urged the UGC to send its probe team to the IU and investigate the allegations.

The University Grant Commission (UGC) recently formed a 3-member probe body to investigate the alleged job scam at the university. Headed by UGC member prof Mohabbat Khan, the team is yet to start its work.

Meanwhile, the Islamic University Teachers Association (IUTA) announced its fresh agitation programmes including sit-in on campus everyday and a human chain in Kusthia town this afternoon.

At least 25 teachers of the university were injured when a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists attacked a peaceful sit-in by the teachers on the campus on Monday.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Bangladeshi shot by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A Bangladeshi youth was shot and wounded by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in Shibganj upazila here early yesterday. The injured was identified as Faruk Hossain, 26, son of Imran Ali of Tarapur Shahapara village in the upazila. Commander of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Battalion-9 Lt. Col. Manzurul Alam said members of BSF from Shubhopur camp in Maldah in Pashcnimbanga opened fire on Faruk when he was working at his cropland near the border at about 6:00am. BGB at a flag meeting yesterday strongly protested the incident.

College student murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A college student was murdered by criminals in Sadar upazila of Meherpur on Monday night. Police recovered the body of Mithun Hossain, 22, a student of Meherpur Pouro Degree College and son of Korban Ali of Sholmari village yesterday morning. Officer in-charge (OC) of Sadar PS Matiur Rahman said that the youth went missing since he came out of his house over a phone call on Monday night. Local people found his body lying at Kutubpur village, three kilometres away from his house at about 4:50pm and informed the local police station, the OC said. Police said the body bore several injury marks.



PHOTO: STAR

As part of a week-long drive to keep markets in Munshiganj district free from formalin, a magistrate examines fish by using a formalin detector at Bikabibazar yesterday.

BCL men hurt in attack

UNB, Sylhet

Two activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were injured in an attack by rival groups in the city on Monday. The injured are Ashim Kanti Dhar and Raju Ahmed, supporters of Mithu group in Tilagar area. Shah Paran police said 8/10 youths hit the two BCL activists with sharp weapons at a mess at Baluchar, leaving them injured in the evening. Police suspected that the attack might be a sequel to an internal conflict. The injured were admitted to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital. Earlier on Sunday, the supporters of two BCL groups, one led by Pankaj and another by Mithu, clashed at Tilagar point, leaving 20 people injured.

3 jailed for chaos in court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A court here on Monday sentenced three people to one year rigorous imprisonment (RI) each for creating chaos in the courtroom. The convicts are Abdul Majid, 28, Selim Hossain, 25, Abdul Mannan, 27. They are residents of different areas of the district. Judicial Magistrate court-2 sources said two people of Sadar upazila came to give their deposition in a murder case when the aforesaid three entered the courtroom and assaulted them. Police later arrested them for disrupting court activities.

Arms, ammo seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Police recovered two USA made pistols, four magazines and 12 bullets in Kachhikata toll plaza area on Natore-Dhaka highway under Gurudapur upazila in the district early yesterday and arrested an alleged peddler. The arrestee was identified as Hazrat Ali, 24, son of Abdur Razzak of village Huzrapur under Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila. Shafiqul Islam, officer in-charge of Gurudapur police station said, on secret information, a team of police led by sub inspector Osman raided the areas from a Dhaka-bound bus coming from Chapainawabganj.

Comilla healthcare cries for care

UNB, Comilla

Healthcare services in the government hospitals in the district are facing serious setback as 64 posts of doctors have been lying vacant for long in the hospitals.

Comilla Civil Surgeon office sources said there are at least 432 posts of doctors in 16 upazila health com-

plexes and Sadar Hospital of the district.

Of the total, 64 posts of physicians have been lying vacant causing sufferings to the people of the district who seek necessary healthcare services.

The vacant posts include eight in Chouddgram upazila, 10 in Nangolkot upazila, four in Laksam,

three in Borura, seven in Homna, two in Chandina, 12 in Muradnagar, two in Daudkandi, three in Debiddar, two in Burichang, six in Brahmanpara, four in Titas and one in Meghna upazila.

Deputy Civil Surgeon of Comilla Dr. Mojibur Rahman told the news agency that they informed

the higher authorities of the doctors' shortage in the hospitals and demanded immediate steps to fill up the vacant posts.

"We hope that the authorities would take initiatives to fill up the vacant posts of doctors immediately to ensure proper health services to the people of the district," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Boulders from Amtoli upazila town protection embankment near Amtoli launch terminal fall into Paira River as erosion by the river has taken a serious turn in the area.