

Brick kiln stands firm only 50 metres away from clinic

By EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

A brick kiln, set up on an agricultural land adjacent to a densely populated area of Duhuli village in Sadar upazila under the district poses serious health hazard, especially to patients of a nearby health care centre.

The kiln named NBL Bricks is only 50 metres away from Duhuli community clinic at Duhuli village.

During a visit to the area on May 26, this correspondent found quite a few patients including pregnant women, elderly people and children standing in a queue to get treatment and medicine from the clinic.

Several of them complained of feeling unwell and even breathing problem as the brick kiln emits hot fume and dust particles. Besides, heavy vehicles passing by the clinic to carry bricks from the kiln cause noise pollution and pose risk of accident, they said.

The government-run clinic provides health service to about five thousand people in surrounding villages of Uttor Dondori, Dakhin Dondori and Duhuli and around a hundred patients daily come there for treatment, said Swapna Rani Roy, in charge



PHOTO: STAR

Toxic black smoke emitting from a brick kiln, only 50 metres away from Duhuli community clinic in Nilphamari Sadar upazila, pollutes the environment of the area and poses serious health risk to patients.

of the clinic.

As per government rules, no brick kiln should be set up on agricultural lands and near densely populated areas and important establishments, said sources concerned in the deputy commissioner's office.

And so, the kiln was set up in violation of rules.

Dr Abdul Mazid, Sadar upazila health and family planning officer, said, "The kiln near Duhuli community clinic is creating health hazard. There will be added

problem as a safe delivery centre under the jurisdiction of the clinic will be inaugurated soon. I shall talk to my higher authority regarding the matter."

Contacted, Abdul Hye, owner of the brick kiln, also holding the post of treasurer in the clinic management committee, said, "My kiln is environment-friendly as it had been converted into a zigzag one last year and hence it does not emit hot fume and ash. I had set up the kiln long before the

community clinic started operation in 2012."

Nezarat Deputy Collector of the district Mahbub-ul-Islam said, "It was responsibility of the Department of Environment to see actual condition of the kiln and the surrounding area before issuing clearance certificate. As the matter has been brought to our notice, we shall investigate the matter and take necessary step."

KURIGRAM POLYTECH Acute shortage of teachers hampers edn

By ABDUL WAHED, Kurigram

Acute shortage of teachers at Kurigram Polytechnic Institute in the town has been hampering education of over 1000 students.

At least 28 posts of teachers have been lying vacant for years. The institute is now running with only 10 teachers, said Principal Abdul Kuddus Sardar.

Set up in 2005, the institute now has about 1,278 students under its four departments-- Computer, Electrical, Construction and Architecture and Interior Design.

Since its establishment, the situation remained almost unchanged for want of teachers and necessary equipment, said the principal.

Finding no other alternatives, the authorities hired some 'guest' teachers to run the academic activities, he added.

Mamunur Rashid, a student of Electrical department, said "our department has only one permanent and four other guest teachers. The guest teachers are often too poorly prepared to educate us".

In-charge of Architecture and Interior Design department Rabiul Awal, also a guest teacher, said that the two departments were running with only two teachers. "The figure should be increased to serve the students better", he said.

At Computer department, although there are 14 sets, eight of them are out of order, said Abdur Rahim, a student, adding that there is no internet connection at their lab.

The principal said that his office has already informed the higher authorities about the critical situation and asked for immediate steps to resolve the matter.

SNIPPETS

Two kids drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sheridaha.

Two children drowned in ponds in the district yesterday. The deceased were identified as Mahamudul Islam, 3, son of Ohidul Islam of Monohorpur village in Kaliganj upazila and Asif, 2, son of Arman Biswas of Katalia village under Kotchandpur upazila. Family sources said, Mahamudul while playing fell in a pond near their house and drowned at 10:30am. Asif accidentally fell in a pond at 11:00am while playing on its bank.

Trader beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A rice trader was beaten to death in Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat district early yesterday. Deceased Nur Mohammad, 36, was son of late Amser Ali of Piara village. Police said, a gang of criminals beat Nur Mohammad up mercilessly, leaving him critically injured at 12:30am while he was returning home from Kamdia Bazar of Gaibandha district. He was rushed to Joypurhat Modern Hospital where he died after sometime.

Schoolgirls rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police rescued four schoolgirls from traffickers in the town yesterday afternoon. They also arrested one Sahabuddin of Pokkhiapara village in connection with the incident. The girls, aged between 10 and 12, hailed from Kalapara upazila. One of the victims said Sahabuddin brought them to the town promising lucrative jobs in Dhaka. Seeing their suspicion movement, a local shopkeeper informed police. Later, the four were rescued, said Tariquzzaman, officer in-charge of Kalapara police station.

Bangalees in CHT enforce hartal today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Three organisations will jointly enforce a 72-hour hartal in three hill districts--Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban--from 6:00am today, demanding cancellation of draft amendments to Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act.

The organisations are Parbatya Somo Odhikar Andolon (SOA), Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Oikya Parishad (PBCOP) and Parbatya Jubo Front (PJF).

Leaders of the organisations announced the programme at a press conference held at Hotel Green Castle in Rangamati on Friday.

The cabinet on May 27 approved in principle the amendments to the law, aiming at resolving the longstanding land disputes in the CHT.

But the settlers alleged that the amendment to the act would only benefit the hill people.

On June 2, Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad (PBCP) enforced a daylong roads and waterways blockade in the three hill districts on the same issue.



PHOTO: STAR

Manikganj municipality authorities dump garbage into Nayakandi Canal beside Manikganj town. Stench spreads over the area, causes nuisance to locals as well as commuters passing through nearby Manikganj-Shingair Road.

JESSORE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY Students boycott exams demanding fee cut

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Students of Jessore Science and Technology University (JSTU) started fresh agitation yesterday, demanding reduction in master's admission and semester fees.

First, second, third and fourth year honours students under 12 faculties boycotted their semester final examinations and staged a demonstration on the campus. In the face of students' agitation, the university authorities postponed all examination and master's classes until June 10.

Earlier, on May 21,

around 2,000 students confined Vice-Chancellor Prof Abdus Sattar to his office, protesting fixation of semester and first ever master's admission fees. They also submitted a memorandum to Proctor Noor Alam on the day.

Their agitation came to a halt on May 22 as the authorities declared the university closed until June 5 for summer vacation. The university reopened on June 6.

The university authorities fixed master's admission fees at Tk 18,000 and semester fees at Tk 4,500. The students demanded that the

authorities fix master's admission fees at Tk 4,000 and semester fees at Tk 3,000.

They said their agitation and boycott of examinations will continue until the demands are met. A meeting of the university regent board is scheduled to be held on June 10 to discuss the fee fixation issues, said Md assistant Registrar Md Emdadul Haque.

A third-year honours student, seeking anonymity said they have started boycotting examinations to mount pressure on the university authorities to meet their demands.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Jessore Science and Technology University stage a demonstration on the campus yesterday, demanding reduction in master's admission and semester fees.

JHALAKATHI, PIROJPUR DISTRICTS

Flash flood due to rain causes crop loss

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Flash flood triggered by tidal surge and incessant rain for the last few days has caused colossal damage to crops in Jhalakathi and Pirojpur districts.

Various types of crops, especially vegetables, on 6,772 hectares of land in four upazilas of Jhalakathi were damaged as floodwater submerged farmlands as well as homesteads.

With recession of the flood water, the picture of damage is becoming clearly visible, reports UNB.

The downpour also triggered water logging in different areas.

Tropical storm Mahasen that left a trail of devastation in the coastal region last month damaged a large number of papaya and banana plantations.

The flash flood has now

added to the situation causing further damage to papaya, banana, chilli, brinjal, bitter gourd, snake gourd and sugarcane fields.

It also affected planted aus paddy seedlings and more than half of the paddy seedbeds in the district.

As a result, aus cultivation is feared to be delayed and its production is likely to face a shortfall.

If aus cultivation is not possible in time, aman production might also be delayed, agri officials said.

In Pirojpur, farmers of over 100 villages suffered serious crop damage due to flood caused by recent week-long downpour, reports our correspondent.

Aman and vegetable orchards on several thousand hectares in five upazilas went under water.

Sources said, most of the

villages under Sapleza, Boro Machhua, Mirukhali, Betmore Razpara and Dhanisafa unions in Mathbaria upazila suffered flood.

Several flood-control embankments at Khetachhira, Charbholmara, Majherchar were damaged adding to the woes of the farmers.

In Bhandaria upazila, Nadmula, Hetalia, Darulhuda, Bholta, Junia, Horinpala and some other villages were flooded.

Fifteen villages under Parehat, Pattashi and Balipara unions of Zianagar, 27 villages in Kawkhali and a few villages in Nesarabad upazilas met similar fate.

Rafik, 27, a day labourer of Zianagar, said they could not work in the field due to flood water there and now leading a miserable life because of that.

Six bridges inaugurated on Dhaka-Aricha highway

Steps taken for road safety, says communications minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

The government has taken a decision to evict all illegal structures and makeshift huts and bazars on both sides of the highways, said Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday.

Punitive action would also be taken against unauthorised vehicles to maximum safety on roads, he said.

To implement the move, the government has already formed a ten-member committee comprising ministers and cabinet secretaries. A ministerial meeting will be held in this regard today.

The minister was inaugurating six bridges on Golora-Saturia road and footpath work of Jagir Bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway in the district yesterday.

Among others, local lawmaker Zahid Maleque Swapan, Deputy Commissioner Md Masood

Karim, chairman Abdul Mazid of Saturia upazila parishad and Manikganj Zila Parishad administrator Golam Mohiuddin, were present at the function.

The district Roads and Highway Department built the bridges at Kamta, Janna, Fukurhati, Kandapara, Purba Hushia and Uttar Kaunnara in Saturia upazila at a cost of Tk 21 crore.

Meanwhile, introduction of 40 double-decker buses on the Dhaka-Aricha highway remained uncertain.

The buses of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) were scheduled to shuttle the busy roads in Shivalaya upazila from May 4 this year.

Utholy Bus Depot in the upazila controls Dhaka-Aricha and Dhaka-Paturia BRTC services, said Abdur Rahim, deputy manager (operation) of the depot.

The authorities had sanctioned 73-seated 40 double-decker buses on the two routes and decided to run

them on roads linking Paturia, Aricha and Gazipur and Motijheel in Dhaka, he said.

The buses were run on trial on the routes, he said, adding that if operated, it would ease the communication of more than 5000 regular passengers.

Sources in the BRTC said that the decision was shelved as some local transport leaders and workers opposed the new service on the routes.

A few BRTC buses are plying Dhaka-Aricha and Dhaka-Paturia routes. Some influential leaseholders run the buses although they have become too old and unusable due to lack of maintenances, said the sources.

Replying to a query, the minister said the 40 double-decker BRTC buses could not hit Dhaka-Aricha and Dhaka-Paturia highways due to the internal feud of local transport owners and workers' union leaders.

BSF picks up two

UNB, Kurigram

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) picked up two Bangladeshi nationals from the border area in Phulbari upazila of the district yesterday morning.

They are Mizanur Rahman and Al-Amin, of Gorok Mandal village along the border.

Lt Col Ziaul Haque Khaled, Commanding officer of 45th battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), said BSF troops of Kharida Haridas camp picked up the duo while they were crossing the no man's land to meet their relatives on the other side of the border around 7am.

He also said that a letter has been sent to the BSF officials for holding a flag meeting over the incident.

ARREST OF LEADER

Jamaat enforces hartal in Cox's Bazar today

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Jamaat will enforce a half-day hartal in Cox's Bazar district today, protesting the arrest of its Sadar upazila Ameer Shafiul Haque Jihadi.

Police arrested Jihadi from his residence in Hazarghata area of the town on Friday for his alleged involvement in February 15 violence in the district.

District Jamaat General Secretary GM Rahim Ullah yesterday gave the call through a press statement.

Meanwhile, eight Shibir men were arrested in

Birampur and Chirirbandar upazilas of Dinaipur yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The arrestees are Farid Ahmed, 20, Raihan, 21, Md Mojibar Rahman, 25, Rubel Ahmed, 19, Bulbul Ahmed, 22, Sabbir Ahmed, 22, Rezaul Karim, 20 and Shamim Reza, 24. Police said they were wanted in several cases.

Detectives raided Shalbanag under Birampur upazila and Ranirbandar under Chirirbandar upazila and arrested the Shibir men. Later, they were produced in a Dinaipur court that sent them to jail.

Erosion threatens Sirajganj upazila parishad complex

UNB, Sirajganj

Erosion by the Jamuna River in the district is about to devour the Chauhali upazila parishad complex.

The mighty river took a devastating turn on Wednesday and Thursday, wreaking havoc on huge public properties.

At least 40 houses and shops and southern portion of the upazila parishad building went into the river during the two days' erosion.

The situation has put the

local people in great anxiety.

Arafat Rahman, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Chauhali upazila, said some important documents and furniture of several sections of the upazila complex had earlier been moved to safer place.

The whole office would be relocated soon after receiving order from the higher authorities, he said.

Some officials are still discharging their duties in the upazila parishad building amid worry, added the UNO.

Aminul Islam, deputy commissioner (DC) of Sirajganj, visited the erosion-hit area and sent an emergency message to the Water Resources Ministry asking for immediate preventive measures.

On the other hand, local Water Development Board (WDB) authorities have already started throwing sandbags on the affected bank of the river since Thursday evening to thwart erosion.