

SAIDPUR RAILWAY WORKSHOP

Rainwater seeps through recently renovated roofs

TEAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Valuable machinery of Saidpur railway workshop are getting damaged rainwater seeps through the recently reconstructed roofs of different 'mini units' at the workshop.

The situation has arisen as the construction firm concerned used low quality materials, officials said.

The government launched 'Saidpur railway workshop modernisation project' with an estimated cost of Tk 156 crore as the workshop established in 1870 during British era was facing production drawbacks due to old machinery

and infrastructure, officials said.

The project work started on February 6 in 2011, to be implemented under four packages.

Dhaka-based construction firm Toma Construction and Company got work order for a package which includes changing of age-old sheds (roofs) of 17 shops (mini workshops) like paint shop, blacksmith shop, carriage construction shop, production machine shop with new ones, construction of floors and setting up of water pumps.

Reconstruction of the 17 shops under the Tk 42 crore

package was completed by February 15 this year.

Work is going on under three other packages including renewal of 60-km rail tracks at the workshop, supply and setting up of different machinery in electrical and mechanical department and so on.

Visiting the workshop a few days ago, journalists found machinery, electric wiring and the floors getting wet with rainwater trickling down the newly built sheds that rusted and developed small holes, as low quality sheets were used in making the sheds. Cracks also

developed on the newly built floors.

As per schedule it was obligatory to use high quality zinc aluminium sheets in roofs but ordinary MS sheets were used instead, said sources at Saidpur rail workshop.

Work is badly disturbed when it rains, workers said.

Abdul Khaleque, a machinist of production machine shop, said they have to work amid life risk as the entire shop gets electrified when it dampens much.

Md Moniruzzaman, executive engineer of 'Saidpur railway workshop modernization project', said they informed the project director in Dhaka of the matter.

Harun Ur Rashid, the project director, said he would investigate the matter and take necessary step according to rules if irregularities are found.

Kazi Md Shamsul Huq, site engineer of Toma Construction and Company, said, "The work was completed according to schedule. As per terms and condition of the project, we will monitor entire package works till February 15 2015. Accordingly, we have started repairing some sheds as defects were found."

Nur Ahmed Hossain, divisional superintendent of Saidpur railway workshop, said, "Rainwater entering the shops causes damage to machinery, and hampers work. I informed the higher authorities about the matter. The construction firm concerned recently started repairing works at the direction of the higher authority."



PHOTO: STAR

Rainwater seeps through the newly reconstructed roofs of several 'mini units' at Saidpur railway workshop. Photo shows two points of a unit where water trickles down its shed.



PHOTO: STAR

Several thousand people of Lamchari village in Barisal Sadar upazila formed a human chain on the bank of the Kirtankhola River yesterday, demanding immediate steps to save Charbaria union from its onslaught.

Political alliance

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The new alliance is likely to emerge immediately after Eid-ul-Azha or on Victory Day, December 16, said sources who were present at the meeting.

Before that the initiators will contact different political parties and their leaders, eminent personalities and social organisations that would agree to run the country in light of the "true spirit of the country's Liberation War".

A five-member sub-committee was formed at the meeting, which will prepare a draft of political programmes of the alliance, including anti-government agitation.

It was decided that the programmes would be finalised in consultation with different professionals.

At the meeting, the ruling alliance was severely criticised for holding a controversial election on January 5 and the way it has been ruling the country since then. The participants expressed their concern over forced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, corruption and nepotism by ruling party men, sources told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, a former organising secretary of the Awami League, who had been at the meeting, said the political alliance would be formed in the greater interest of the country and to establish a true democracy.

"I joined the meeting by saying that I would represent the Awami League in the alliance and would not go against its fundamental policies."

There is no alternative to an "alternative force" as both AL and BNP have failed to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people, said Mahmudur Rahman Manna, convenor of Nagorik Oikya.

HUMAN CHAIN IN LALMONIRHAT

'Weed out fake FFs, cancel their certificates'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Freedom fighters formed a human chain beside Lalmonirhat-Burimari road in Hatibandha upazila town under the district on Tuesday, demanding cancellation of 53 fake freedom fighters' certificates.

They also held a press conference at the upazila unit office of Muktiyoddha Sangsad, and submitted memorandum to the prime minister through the upazila nirbahi officer.

"As many as 53 people of Hatibandha upazila managed fake certificates of freedom fighters with the help of a local Awami

League leader. They neither fought nor received any training in freedom fighters' camps during the Liberation War. They didn't even help any freedom fighters. But they are enjoying all government facilities," Fazlul Haque, commander of upazila Muktiyoddha Sangsad, said at the press conference.

"We the genuine freedom fighters feel ashamed to see fake freedom fighters taking seats in the front row at government programmes, meetings, and seminars, especially during different national days like the Victory Day and the Independence Day," said freedom fighter Nur Islam, former commander of

upazila Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

The fake certificate holders are so influential that they neglect the genuine freedom fighters, said freedom fighter Akbar Ali.

"A good number of genuine freedom fighters in our upazila are yet to get certificates, whereas many people have managed fake freedom fighters' certificates. It is very sad and shameful for the nation," said another freedom fighter Matiar Rahman.

The speakers warned of tougher programme if the authorities concerned fail to take step to cancel the certificates of 53 fake freedom fighters of the upazila by a month.

Acute space shortage in Hili land port complex

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Insufficient space inside Panama Port Link Ltd complex in Hili land port in Hakimpur upazila under the district causes various problems, along with posing the risk of accidents.

Babul Mia, 25, of Nawpara village under Hakimpur upazila was killed as a truck ran over him inside the port complex on Tuesday.

A helper was driving the truck that time, police said.

On July 2, Atul Kumar 20, a helper of an Indian truck, was killed as he was run over by a Bangladeshi truck inside the port complex.

In 2013, two men were killed in the same way, port sources said, adding that several others, most of them port workers, were also injured.

Panama Hili Port Link Ltd in 2006 took over the charge to operate Hili land port for 25 years under Build-Operate-Transfer [BOT] condition, as approved by Bangladesh Land Port Authority.

The complex is set up on a 10-acre area nearly 1.5km from Zero Line of India Bangladesh border.

Seventy percent of the area is used for parking of trucks of India and Bangladesh and the rest 30 percent area comprises administration complex, sheds for loading and unloading goods, warehouses, mosque, and temple.

Port officials said, around 130 goods-laded Indian trucks daily come to Bangladesh on an average, and nearly 150 Bangladeshi trucks come to the complex and leave for elsewhere in

the country after loading imported goods.

Besides, 100 to 120 Indian trucks keep waiting inside the port due to shortage of loading and unloading facilities.

The complex has to deal with a large number of people coming for different purposes.

Md SM Haidar, assistant manager of Panama Port Link Ltd, said, "Space shortage inside the port complex causes various problems, including accidents. A section of helpers drive trucks, despite our forbidding through loud speakers. The district administration of Dinajpur acquired 11.86 acres of land for extension of the port area to solve the existing problems. But the port authority is yet to get the land."

Communications

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the function of the ministry.

Asked about the reasons behind the renaming, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said renaming was necessary to specify the role and functions of his ministry.

On April 28, 2011, the

government revamped the communications ministry by dividing it into two ministries, namely, communications ministry and railway ministry.

The government in 2011 also renamed the establishment ministry as the public administration ministry.

No sports

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This arrangement forced the district cricket team to postpone their practice for the last 10 days and they are uncertain about the resumption of their practice.

Moulvibazar District Sports Association said it permitted the minister to use the stadium for the wedding following his written application last month.

The family members of the minister said they would repair whatever damage

would be done to the stadium after the wedding ceremony.

Mohsin Ali who created sensation after smoking at a public programme and hurling abusive words at the journalists once again came to the limelight for arranging such a massive wedding ceremony in his home district.

The minister held a meeting with the local journalists at Moulvibazar Circuit House yesterday and invited them.

Wild elephants make life of 200 Rangamati families miserable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A herd of 17 wild elephants is making life miserable for around 200 families at Chairmanpara village in Sadar upazila of the district.

The elephants come to the village at night, destroy paddy fields and fruit orchards and leave before daybreak.

Locals said the elephants have already destroyed crops and many orchards of banana, coconut, papaya and litchi at the village.

Unable to counter the animals, the terrified villagers spend sleepless nights amid fear of attacks by the wild elephants.

Villagers said they have repeatedly urged the forest department to protect their lives and property by driving the wild elephants away

from the area, but to no effect.

Contacted, Abu Hanif Patwary, conservator of forests in Rangamati, said: "If elephants destroy farmland, orchards or attack human habitation, we have nothing to do. As per International Wildlife Law, we cannot kill or capture any elephant".

While visiting Chairmanpara village recently, Subankar Chakma of the village said at least 2000 pineapple plants at his orchard were damaged by the elephants.

Hittlar Dewan, headman of Jibtoli Mouza, said a list of the affected families is being prepared for giving them compensation. Forest officials should take immediate measures to save lives and properties of the villagers, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

A herd of 17 wild elephants at Chairmanpara village in Rangamati Sadar destroying fruit orchards and paddy fields almost every night for the last few days.

SNIPPETS

Forest robber held with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Detective Branch (DB) of Police in Khulna arrested an alleged forest robber from Tolna area in Dumuria upazila early yesterday. The arrestee is Mujibor Gazi, 40, son of Tokim Gazi of Goroikhal village in Paikgachha upazila. Inspector Rokonurzzaman, in-charge of DB police in Khulna, said on secret information, a team led by Sub-inspector Mukto Roy raided the area around 3:30am and arrested Mujibor along with a country-made gun and five bullets. The arrestee is a member of a notorious gang that had been committing robberies in the Sundarbans and its adjacent areas for long, said the inspector.

College student electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

A college boy was electrocuted at Taraganj village in Lalmoan upazila early yesterday. The deceased Naziur Rahaman Monju, 21, son of Ruhul Amin of the village, was a BA (second year) student at Shahbazpur Govt College. Shah Jalal, sub-inspector of Lalmoan Police Station, quoted father of the deceased as saying that Monju came in contact with a live wire while he was trying to repair a snapped electric line at their house around 5:30am. He was rushed to Lalmoan Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared him dead.

Water recedes

FROM PAGE 1

One was bitten by a snake, while 13 people got hurt while wading through floodwaters, the office said.

Two children and an elderly man drowned in three upazilas of the district on Wednesday and Tuesday. The deceased were identified as Kakoli, 2, Arif, 3, and Gena Munshi, 65.

Civil Surgeon Hafizur Rahman of Jamalpur said 77 medical teams were working in 48 affected unions of the district.

Water of the Jamuna was flowing 12 centimetres below the danger mark at Bahadurabad Ghat point, the Water Development Board sources said.

Three children drowned in floodwater in Kurigram within the last 24 hours, ending at 6:00pm. The deceased are Rafiqul Islam, 2, Sumayea, 1, and Abirul

Islam, 2. A total of nine children have died so far in Kurigram.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reports: 79 families have become homeless due to erosion of the Padma this year while around 3,000 families had been affected by the floods.

Sumana Das, 7, died from snakebite at Rajdia village in Sirajdikhan yesterday morning.

Kazi Shariful Alam, deputy commissioner of Munshiganj, claimed that the spread of waterborne diseases was under control. Several medical teams were working to tackle the situation.

Quoting the chairman of the Sherpur upazila parishad, our correspondent reports, the flood situation was improving there but people needed relief materials.