

DISPUTE OVER CUTTING OPEN 'TEMPORARY' DYKE

Hundreds of aman farmers suffer due to water-logging

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Farmers have failed to cultivate aman on around 500 hectares of land in Mirukhali union of Mathbaria upazila under the district this season as they could not cut an earthen embankment to release stagnant water allegedly due to interference by local influential person.

Four years ago, local farmers made an embankment on Bhuter Khal (canal) at Badura village in Mathbaria upazila to save their ripe aman paddy from tidal water.

At the beginning of aman seedling cultivation this year, they wanted to cut open the embankment to let stagnant water flow down from their fields.

But Abul Kalam Sharif, principal of Begum Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Fazil Madrasa, prevented the act, saying that his institution, situated near the canal, will be affected if the embankment is removed.

He has also arranged planting some betel nut and wood producing trees there, apparently to make the embankment permanent, locals said.

Local civil and police administration also supported the principal's stand.

Mathbaria Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Ahsan Habib said the embankment cannot be removed without official permission as it is on a 'government canal'.

On the other hand, Mirukhali union parishad Chairman Md Sobahan Sharif said, "Local farmers made the embankment willingly for their own inter-



PHOTO: STAR

The 'temporary' dyke on Bhuter Khal at Badura village in Mathbaria upazila of Pirojpur keeps over 500 hectares of cropland flooded. Inset, water hyacinth grows on the water logged aman fields.

est and they can remove it when needed. If the embankment is made permanent, aman cultivation in my union will be badly affected."

This year around 750 farmers of the area failed to grow aman seedlings as their field remained inundated.

Visiting different villages of the union, this correspondent saw farmers striving to plough their flooded lands and plant seedlings that they had carried on boats.

"This year I could not cultivate my four bighas of aman land as it remained flooded and I could not

grow any seedlings," said Kalam Jomadder of Boro Soula village.

Like him, a large number of farmers of Badura, Boro Soula, Chhoto Soula, Ghopkhali, Bashubuniya, Rayerbad and Uttar Mirukhali villages could not cultivate their lands although they are mostly dependent on aman farming.

"Around half of 2,125 hectares of cropland in Mirukhali union remains under water this season. Still farmers can cultivate the lands as the water level usually do not rise much. But this year the

waterlogging turned serious, as water could not flow down due to the embankment on Bhuter Khal. And so, farmers have failed to cultivate aman on 450-500 hectares of land," said Md Jalal Hossain, sub assistant agriculture officer in Mirukhali union.

The people living near the embankment face untold sufferings as their houses are flooded during the high tide every day.

"Only a sluice gate can solve all these problems. I will submit a proposal to the Water Development Board for making a sluice gate in the canal," said the UNO.

Magistrate arrested for marrying minor girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

Police arrested a senior judicial magistrate of Charfasson upazila under the district on Saturday on charge of marrying a minor girl, that too without permission from his first wife.

"Earlier on Wednesday, Sanjida Khalek Palash, wife of Senior Judicial Magistrate Abdur Rab Mia, filed a case (No 948/2014) against him in Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal. Following the court order, Charfasson police arrested the judge on Saturday when he came to Bhola Sadar Police Station to file a General Diary," said Mahafuzur Rahman, assistant superintendent of police (Sadar Circle).

On September 15, police rescued the judge, hailing from Amkhola village in Galachipa upazila under Patuakhali district, from a group of people who had surrounded him after he was found with a minor girl in Charfasson Dakbungalow around 11:00pm, said Abul Bashar, officer in charge of Charfasson police station.

"As the tribunal issued a warrant on Thursday, we arrested the judge with the help of Bhola Sadar police on Saturday," he said.

After his rescue from mob on Monday, the judge said that he married the girl named Asma Begum for a son as all the three children from his first wife were daughters.

He also claimed that his second wife is 19-year-old and so, she is not a minor girl. Asma Begum passed the SSC examinations this year from Purbo Ramaganj High School and according to her registration card her date of birth is March 20, 1998.

Advocate Shihab Uddin of Charfasson Court appealed the authority to fill the vacant post of judges within a short time as litigants and lawyers are facing problem at the court after arrest of the senior judicial magistrate.

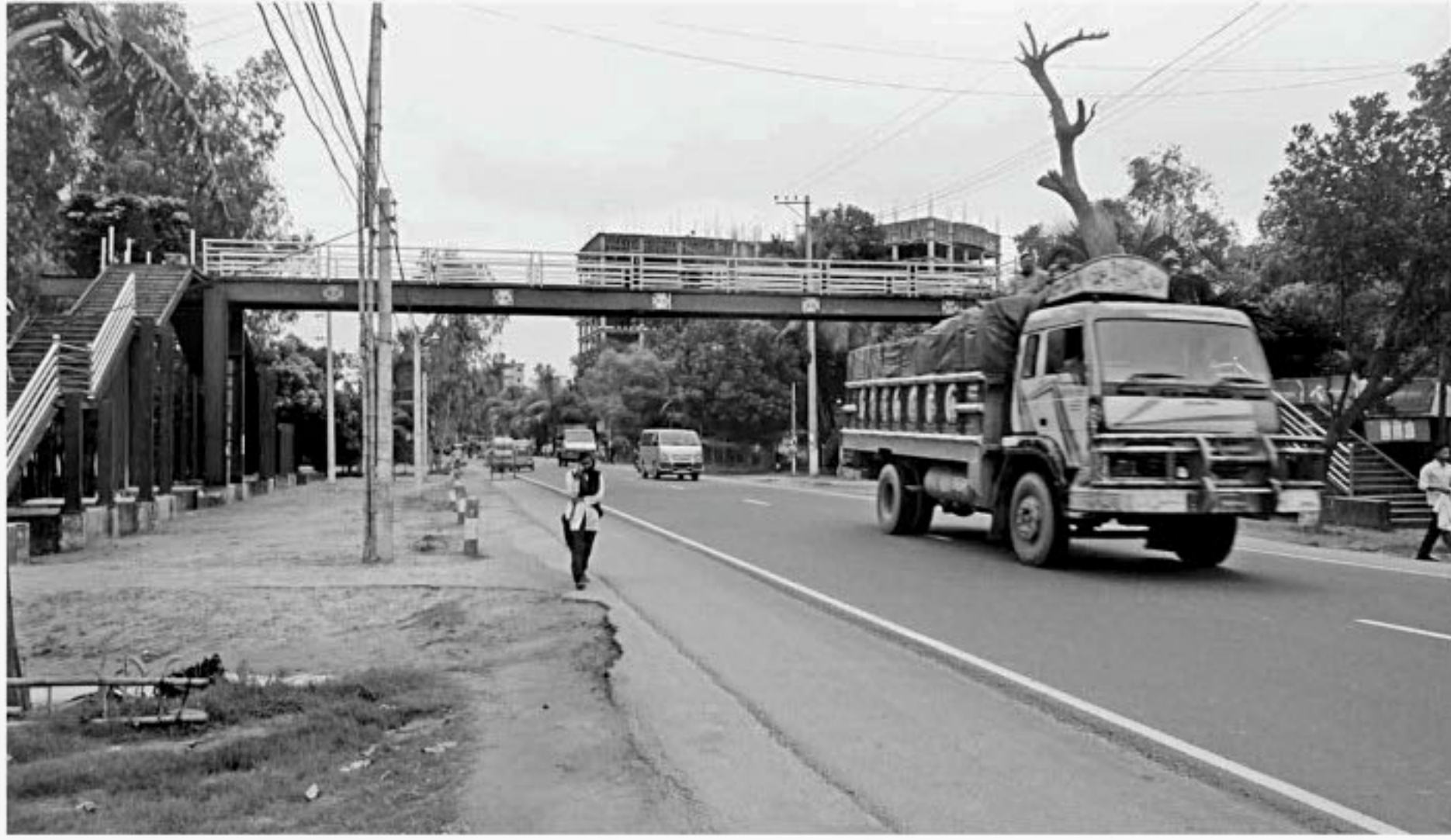


PHOTO: STAR

One of the two newly built footbridges awaits opening at Gokul near the TMSS head office on Rangpur-Dhaka highway in Sadar upazila of Bogra.

2 footbridges, a weighbridge to open on Bogra highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Two footbridges and a weighbridge on Panchagarh-Dhaka highway via Bogra are going to be opened soon for public and vehicles as their construction has been completed.

The bridges and weight control points were set up at a cost of Tk 3.81 crore, said sources at Roads and Highways Department (RHD) office in Bogra.

Of the bridges, one has been built at Gokul on Rangpur-Dhaka highway in Sadar upazila while the other at Majhira "B" block near Bogra Majhira Cantonment on Bogra-Dhaka highway in Shajahanpur upazila.

Meanwhile, the weighbridge has been installed in Gokul area on Rangpur-Dhaka highway of Mohasthangarh area, said the

sources.

RHD officials said the weighbridge will help check and control the loads by the heavy vehicles which will protect the highway from early and repeated damages.

The footbridges were constructed to facilitate the movement of pedestrians and reduce the risk of accident as heavy vehicles from 10 districts of the northern zone of the country ply the highway everyday, said executive engineer of Bogra RHD Jahangir Alam.

A student of TMSS Medical College, Nibir Wares, said due to the footbridge, they can now easily go to the hospital from the college without the risk of any accident.

Earlier, a footbridge was built on the west side of Bogra Railway Station during the tenure of President H.M Ershad.



PHOTO: STAR

Incessant rain leads to water-logging on several roads in Rangpur city due to lack of proper drainage system. This photo was taken from Jahaj Company intersection yesterday afternoon.

KILLING OF 4 COPS Charges pressed against 234, including ex-Jamaat MP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Police have pressed charges against 234 people, including former Jamaat lawmaker of Gaibandha-1 constituency Moulana Abdul Aziz, in a case filed for killing four policemen during the violence of Jamaat-Shibir over the verdict of Delwer Hossain Sayeedi.

Mozammel Huq, officer in-charge of Sunderganj police station, yesterday said he submitted the charge sheet before the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court in the district on September 17 but it remained undisclosed in fear of further violence.

On February 28 last year, as soon as the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) awarded death penalty to Sayeedi, Jamaat-Shibir men locked in violence at Bamondanga rail station.

They carried out arson attack at the rail station and set fire to a police outpost where they beat four policemen dead and injured four others.

The deceased are Tozammel Huq of Rahamat char village in Rangpur district, Hazarat Ali of Kishamat Godhra village in Kurigram, Bablu Mia of Thakurpara village in Bogra and Nazimuddin of Dhanarua village in Gaibandha.

The then investigation officer Abu Hanif filed a case against 89 identified and 2,500 unidentified people in connection with the killings, said the OC.

Robbers kill 5-year-old girl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A gang of robbers shot dead a minor girl and injured her grandmother during a robbery at a house in the district's Boalkhali upazila early yesterday.

They also looted Tk 6,000 in cash and around three tolas of gold ornaments from the house at Pathanpara village, said police.

The dead, Shamima Akther Isma, 5, was daughter of Abu Taher. Her grandmother Fatema Begum, 45, has been undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Quoting the family, Shoaib Reza, chairman of Charandwip union parishad, said some seven to eight robbers came to the village by a CNG-run auto-rickshaw and entered the house of Ismail Khan by cutting its steel gate around 2:30am. One of them wielded locally made gun while the rest sharp weapons.

Taking hostage the family members at gunpoint, the robbers broke open the almirah and took away the money and gold ornaments, he added.

According to the family members, as Shamima began to cry in fear, the robber shot her in the head and in the face, leaving her seriously injured. He also opened fire on her grandmother when she came to save Shamima.

The victims were rushed to CMCH where Shamima died later.

Police seized the auto-rickshaw in the afternoon.

Revision trial of Felani case begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

The revision trial of the Felani murder case began yesterday at a special court of Indian Border Security Force's (BSF) sector headquarters in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal in India.

"The court may call us for taking the witnesses from Bangladesh within one or two days. We are ready to go to Cooch Behar," said Lt Colonel Mofazzal Hosain Akand, commanding officer (CO) of BGB 45 Battalion in Kurigram.

He said Felani's father Nural Islam and her maternal uncle Abdul Hanif are supposed to give testimonies before the court.

Fishermen demand security from robbers in Bay

Human chain in Patuakhali town

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Fishermen of Kuakata area formed a human chain in front of the deputy commissioner's office in Patuakhali town yesterday to press for their six-point demand.

The demands include security of fishermen in the Bay, Rehabilitation of the families of 86 fishermen of Patuakhali, Bhola, Barguna and Pirojpur who were killed by robbers in the Bay in the last nine months, and steps to rescue 400 fishermen abducted by the robbers during the period.

Over 100 fishermen joined the programme that continued for an hour from 11:30am. They later submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner.

In the memo, the fishermen stated that 11 robber gangs swooped on at least 2,000 fishing trawlers in the last nine months since January and killed 86 fishermen. The gangs also abducted around 400 fishermen from the Bay for ransom during the period.

They demanded that the authorities concerned take

immediate steps to rescue the abducted fishermen from robbers' dens in the Sundarbans.

Receiving the memorandum, Deputy Commissioner Amitabh Sarker said they will take all necessary measures to ensure security of fishermen in the Bay.

Contacted, Md Kama Uddin, coastguard commander in Patuakhali, said they cannot act promptly due to lack of vessel and adequate manpower. "Only six men are working in Patuakhali office," the commander said.



PHOTO: STAR

Around 100 fishermen from Kuakata area form a human chain in front of the deputy commissioner's office in Patuakhali yesterday, demanding steps to ensure security of fishermen in the Bay and rescue the fishermen abducted by robbers for ransom.

Heavy rain triggers flash flood in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Heavy rain in hill areas across the border in the last three days has triggered flash flood, inundating at least nine unions of Durgapur and Kalmakanda upazilas.

The affected unions are Birishiri, Gaokandia, Kakoirgora, Bakoljura and Chandigor in Durgapur upazila, and Kharnai, Rangchati, Borkapon and Pogla unions in Kalmakanda upazila.

About 500 thatched

houses were badly damaged and nearly 80 percent of the newly transplanted aman seedlings and vegetables on several thousand acres of land went under water.

The River Someshwari in Durgapur marked sharp rise in the last three days and now flowing about 170 centimetres above the danger level, said Khushimohon Sarkar, executive engineer at Netrakona Water Development Board (WDB).

WDB sources said, three other rivers-- Mogra, Kongsha and

Dhanu, also swelled in the last couple of days, marooning thousands in the adjacent areas in Khaliajuri, Atpara and Madan upazilas.

Netrakona district fishery officials said, fishes worth Tk 5 crore were washed away as at least 600 ponds had been overflowed by floodwater in the affected unions.

Contacted, WDB executive engineer Khushimohon Sarkar said, flood situation may worsen as the major rivers continued rising due to onrush of water from the hills.



PHOTO: STAR

A woman and a man wade through floodwater at Birishiri village in Durgapur upazila of Netrakona.



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Expression of Interest (EOI)

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), a humanitarian organisation, working for disaster response and management, cyclone preparedness, disaster relief and recovery, community based disaster preparedness, risk reduction and mitigation, etc. is looking for consultant to develop and design the IEC materials (poster, flash card etc.) for Vulnerability to Resilience (V2R) Project.

Individual consultants are requested to submit EOI By September 28, 2014 till 4pm.

Interested consultants are requested to communicate with Joyanal Abedin, Project Manager, V2R, Cell: 01811458511, Email: joyanal.abedin@bdracs.org for specific ToR and specification.