



PHOTO: STAR

Vast chars (landmass emerged from riverbed) appearing in the Jamuna River in Fulchhari upazila under Gaibandha district hampers navigation in the mighty river. Right, boats lie anchored at Balashi ghat (landing station) in the district as they can hardly move due to sharp decline of the water level.

Sharp decrease of Jamuna water hampers navigation

Many river routes closed, Balashi-Bahadurabad railway ferry service suspended

KM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha
 Serious decline of water level in the Jamuna River has appeared much earlier than the usual period this year, posing threat to navigation in different channels of the mighty river. The railway marine department had to shut down wagon ferry services between Balashi and Bahadurabad stations from September 5, said sources of the department at Balashi. "It needs at least six feet deep water for movement of railway ferry barges to carry goods wagons between Balashi and Bahadurabad stations, but this year water level started declining in mid-August. Now water level has reached below three feet at many points," said Mosiur

Rahman, marine inspector at Balashi railway ferry station. Around 200 small and big shoals have developed around 50-kilometre river routes from Kamarjani ghat of Gaibandha Sadar upazila to Jamira of Fulchhari upazila along the western channel of the Jamuna River, narrowing down the river routes into tiny canals. Due to the situation, plying of passenger and cargo boats is hampered and people living in different char lands are facing difficulty to go to different destinations. Moreover, transportation of paddy, jute, fertiliser and food grains through the river routes is facing serious setback. "We incur additional transportation cost for carrying fertiliser from

Jamuna Fertiliser Factory by road or rail, as the river channel dried up," said Abdul Latif Hakkani, president of Gaibandha district fertiliser association. Earlier, the river route remained navigable until January, but this year water level has declined much earlier, making the movement of cargo and passenger boats difficult, said Kamol Mia, a boatman at Balashi terminal. Ten of the 18 river ghats (landing stations) in Gaibandha Sadar and Fulchhari upazilas have already closed as the routes lost navigable depth, said Joydul Abedin Jalal, chairman of Fazlupur union parishad in Fulchhari upazila. With the tributaries of the Jamuna gradually drying up, only a

few small boats can now ply the routes and they have to cover longer distance to evade being grounded, said MA Sabur Sarker, chairman of Fulchhari union parishad. Taking the risk of grounding, ferryboats are still plying cautiously on Fulchhari-Balashi, Gajaria-Golna, Singria-Jhanjair, Goonbhari-Kalasona, Fulchhari-Gutail Sayedpur-Rajibpur, Fulchhari-Amtoli, and Fulchhari-Sariakandi routes, said Abu Sayeed Sarker, chairman of Fulchhari upazila parishad. Removal of silt through regular dredging is a must to keep the river routes navigable round the year, said Abdul Awal Mia, executive engineer, Water Development Board, Gaibandha.

ARMED OUTSIDERS' INTRUSION INTO CAMPUS BAU students agitate demanding action

BAU CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh
 Classes and examinations of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) in Mymensingh remained suspended for the second consecutive day yesterday as the students continued agitation demanding action against armed outsiders who intruded into the campus on Monday. In the evening that day, outsider motorbike riders led by Mymensingh district unit president of Chhatra League Md Jasim Uddin staged showdown on the campus, firing several rounds of bullets and blasting cocktails in front of Ashrafal Haque Hall, Shaheed Shamsul Haque Hall and Shaheed Nazmul Ahsan Hall of BAU. Creating a panicky situation on the campus for quite

sometime, they left the campus. Although witnesses on the campus narrated the incidents of firing and cocktail blasts on Monday evening, Jasim Uddin denied occurrence of any such incident on BAU campus. Immediate after the incident, general students brought out a protest procession and issued a 24-hour ultimatum to the university authorities demanding arrest and exemplary punishment of the miscreants. Demanding adequate security arrangements on the campus, students staged demonstration and formed a human chain yesterday. As the 24-hour deadline was over on Tuesday night without any positive outcome, the students brought out a procession yesterday

afternoon and staged demonstration in front of the Teachers-Students Centre (TSC) on the campus. Speakers at the programme urged the university authorities to take immediate steps against the miscreants and warned of tougher movement otherwise. The students' representatives later sat in a discussion with the university administration. In this regard, BAU Proctor Prof Dr Harun-ur-Rashid said, "We have informed the district administration of the matter to take necessary steps against the outsider miscreants. We hope that the students will attend their class by Thursday." Additional police forces have been deployed on the campus to avert further untoward incident.

Sundarganj UZ chairman, vice-chairman suspended

Also Jamaat leaders, they are charge-sheeted in the cases for killing 4 cops, vandalism

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha
 Chairman and vice-chairman of Sundarganj Upazila Parishad have been suspended as they are charge-sheeted accused in the cases for killing four cops, vandalism and arson attack. They are upazila parishad Chairman Majedur Rahman, also assistant secretary of the district unit of Jamaat-e-Islami, and Vice-Chairman Abu Solaiman Sarker, also assis-

tant secretary of the party's Sundarganj unit. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ehsan-e-Elahi received the suspension letters, issued by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD), on Tuesday evening, upazila parishad sources said. In the same order ministry also asked Chairman Majedur, who is now on bail, to hand over the charge to Rezia Begum, vice-

chairman of the upazila parishad, the DC said. Police on submitted charge sheet against some Jamaat-Shibir men, including Majedur Rahman and Abu Solaiman, in the cases for killing four policemen of Bamondanga police outpost, vandalising and arson attacks on public properties in the upazila on February 28 last year. The upazila chairman and vice-chairman recently obtained anticipatory bail from the court.



AL men build dam in irrigation project for fish cultivation

50 thousand farmers in Agoiljhara upazila of Barisal affected

SUAHNATO KUMAR GHOSH, Barisal
 A group of people belonging to ruling Awami League (AL) have created a dam in the middle of an irrigation project, affecting agricultural activities of over 50 thousand people in Satla-Bagda area in Agoiljhara upazila under the district. The unscrupulous act also wreaks havoc on local environment as spurious feed is used for pisciculture there, locals said. Implementation of Satla-Bagda Irrigation Project from Sandhya River of Wajirpur to Poisarhut River of Agoiljhara started in 1973 and ended 1984, said locals and officials. Recently a group of people led by ruling Awami League (AL)-backed Agoiljhara upazila parishad Chairman Golam Murtaza

Khan started a 'food for work' programme for fish farming in that project area, creating a dam in the midway of polder-3 at Purbo Kathiara village in Agoiljhara upazila. "Thousands of people at Purba Kathiara, Rautpara, Ashokbon, Taltalar Math, Bhadropara villages are dependent for their livelihood on cultivating boro paddy with the irrigation facilities of this project. But creating dam in the middle of the project for fish farming will leave them unemployed," said Sukumar Biswas, 80, a farmer of the area. "Cultivation of boro paddy depends on irrigation and the season starts from Agrahayan of Bangla calendar (November-December). But the farming this year will be badly hampered if the dam created for



PHOTO: STAR

This canal of an irrigation project in Agoiljhara upazila under Barisal district can now hardly serve its purpose as a few locals belonging to ruling Awami League have built an earthen dam there to use it for fish cultivation.

SANITY AT LAST! Alipur (Shapla Sarak), above, replaces Alipur (Pakistanpara), below, as name of place on the signboard of M/S Sonargaon Parcel Service in Faridpur town as the local administration took quick steps to the effect yesterday, following publication of a photograph of the earlier writing in The Daily Star the day before.

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CELEBRATING LIFE 2014 GRAND GALA CELEBRATION
 Chief Guest: Honorable President Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid

Due to security reasons all invited guests, participants and winners are earnestly requested to be present at the venue by 4:30PM as gates will be closed as soon as the Honourable President arrives. Sorry for the inconvenience and hope you enjoy the show.

Date: 22nd November 2014 | Time: 4:30PM | Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium
 A dance drama, Tasher Desh, written by Rabindranath Tagore, and presented by Shadhona, will be performed at the end of the prize giving ceremony

Since the Honorable President Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid will be present at the event as chief guest, therefore for security reasons, personal belongings such as bags, purses, food, beverage, cell phones, cameras and any electronic devices will NOT be allowed in the Awards Ceremony premises. Please ensure that you have this card with you when you seek entry into "Celebrating Life" Award Ceremony premises. Each card is valid for one person only and is non-transferable.

pisciculture is not removed," said Mayuri, 60, a boro farmer. Kalipodo, 53, a resident of the area, said closing the open water flow and using poisonous fish feed there is causing serious pollution, making the water putrefied. "Sweet water fishes are dying, and crabs and scorpions are leaving the polluted water to take shelter on lands, even houses of people. Using the water for bathing and washing, people are being affected with skin diseases. Even grass and trees on the banks of the water body are dying," he said. The affected people have urged the government to save their livelihood from the harmful activities of the ruling party men, said locals. Lokman Hossain, a local activist of AL, said the dam was created two months ago with permission from the upazila chairman. Golam Mortuza Khan, AL-backed chairman of Agoiljhara upazila parishad, said a three-month-long project of pisciculture was taken to help the local unemployed youths. He admitted that the pisciculture project started without any approval from the authorities concerned but claimed it will not hamper livelihood of locals and environment of the area. Devi Chanda, upazila nirbahi officer of Agoiljhara, said creating any obstacle to the flow of any open water body is illegal and none was permitted to start a pisciculture project there. "The matter was discussed in the meeting of law and order situation in the area on August 31. A three-member probe committee headed by upazila agriculture officer has been formed to investigate the matter. Steps will be taken according to their report," she said. Zahiruddin Ahmed, executive engineer of Water Development Board, Barisal office, said they did not give any permission to anybody to create any dam there and they will investigate the allegations. Sukumar Biswas, director of the environment directorate office in Barisal, said creating any obstacle in an open water flow is illegal under Wetland Act and he will investigate the matter.