

# ROCK CRUSHING IN DIMLA OF NILPHAMARI Thousands in 10 villages at serious health risk

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Nilphamari

Over 20 thousand people in ten villages of Dimla upazila under the district remains at serious health risk as around a hundred machines are operating to crush rocks extracted from the Teesta riverbed and underground, causing serious sound and air pollution.

From the area, 50-60 trucks loaded with rocks are daily sent to different places of the country to use in construction works, said traders and owners of rock crushing machines.

Small and medium sized rocks are directly sold to buyers while big sized rocks having diameter of five inches or more are made smaller with crushing machines for convenient use, said machine owners.

"During the work, rock particles and dusts enter human lungs, causing respiratory problems like asthma, bronchitis, tuberculosis and even silicosis. It may also cause eye irritation and cancer," said Mostafizar Rahman, civil surgeon of Nilphamari.

Thundering sound of those machines affects the hearing system, even may cause permanent deafness, he added.

Visiting a few affected villages including Sutibari, Purbo Kharibari, Tepa Kharibari, Purbo Chhatnai colony and Dalia it was found that dozens of such crushing machines are operating openly in residential areas.

About 500 people, some of them women,



PHOTO: STAR

**Stone crushing in densely populated areas causes serious air and sound pollution while the workers remain highly vulnerable to serious diseases as no safety measure like protective gears is arranged for them. The photo was taken from Sutipara village in Dimla upazila under Nilphamari district a few days ago.**

work there without wearing masks or specialised spectacles and so, remain highly vulnerable due to exposure to rock dust and continuous sound pollution.

"I have been serving as a worker of a rock-crushing machine at Dalia village in Dimla upazila for one year. Now I am suffering from bad headache, eye irritation, cough and respiratory problems," said Golenur Begum, 48.

Another worker Shamsher Ali of Chhatnai Colony village said he gets Tk 250 for working 12 hours a day but has to spend Tk 50-Tk 60 for buying medicines as exposure

to rock dust caused him diseases.

"As a rock crushing machine is operating near our house, dust from there gets mixed with our foods, making them difficult to eat. But there is none to stop this offence as owners are influential people," said housewife Morsheda Begum at Sutibari village.

Enayet Ali, owner of a rock crushing machine at Pagolpara village, admitted that such machines cause air and sound pollution.

"If the government makes a rock-crushing zone on empty khas land and arrange safety measures and medical facilities for the

workers, we will shift there," he said.

Osman Gani, deputy director of Rangpur divisional office of the Department of Environment, said if the local administration makes arrangement for shifting all rock-crushing machines to a particular place away from locality it would be easier to bring them under environmental rules.

Rezaul Karim, UNO of Dimla, said he had directed the officials concerned to make a list of such machines and directed the owners to shift those away from locality.

## Man killed as gas cylinder explodes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A pedestrian was killed and another injured as a gas cylinder exploded at Sutrapur Reaz Kazi Lane in the district town yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Ruku Chowdhury, 25, son of Masud alias Mahatab Chowdhury of Gohail Road in the town.

Police and locals said one Abdus Salam, 60, a balloon trader, kept the cylinder beside the road at Sutrapur Reaz Kazi Lane in the area around 10:00am.

All of a sudden, the cylinder exploded, leaving Ruku dead on the spot and another local vegetable trader injured. The 50-year-old injured was later rushed to Mohammad Ali Hospital in the town.

Following the incident, aggrieved relatives of the deceased beat up the cylinder owner, said superintendent of police Mozammel Haque, adding that they also swooped on the flat of Salam at Comfort Garden in the town.

Abdus Salam was detained in connection with the incident, said the SP.

## Faridpur JCD chief held

UNB, Faridpur

Police arrested the district unit president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and three other activists from Khabaspur intersection area of the town yesterday morning.

The arrestees were identified as district Chhatra Dal president and Sadar upazila vice-chairman Benzir Ahmed Tabriz, Shaikat Hossain, Shamimul Haq and Monir Hossain Sohag.

Police arrested them when some activists of Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal brought out a procession around 11:00 am protesting issuance of arrest warrant against BNP vice chairman Tareque Rahman.

# Several more areas were liberated on this day

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Several more areas of the country were freed from the clutches of Pakistan occupation forces on this day in 1971.

Gobindaganj upazila of Gaibandha was freed after killing of about 200 Pakistan army personnel in a heavy fight with freedom fighters and allied forces, reports our correspondent.

During the period of liberation war, the occupational forces set up a permanent camp at Hawyakhana near Katakhalhi bridge on Bogra-Rangpur highway for easy movement of army convoy. Scores of men and women were tortured and later killed at the camp.

Occupation forces set up two other 'concentration camps' at Mohimaganj sugar mill's rest house and Mohimaganj Alia Madrasa, where they created torture cells. Everyday Razzaker and Al-Badr members used to bring suspected freedom fighters and women to the camp.

On August 3, Pakistan army men caught three eminent persons of Mohimaganj-Abdul Kader Sarker, Abdus Sobhan Akanda and Emaduddin Akanda - and took them to local army camp. At dead of night, they dragged them to Malancha point on Gobindaganj- Mohimaganj road, shot them dead and buried them.

On December 11, freedom fighters and allied forces attacked Gobindaganj in three

groups in the early morning in which about 200 Pakistani forces were killed at Katakhalhi while the remaining forces fled to Bogra cantonment.

On December 12, freedom fighters and people of all walks of life assembled on Gobindaganj High School ground and hoisted the flag of independent Bangladesh. Narsingdi district also had the taste of freedom on this day, reports our correspondent.

Although the freedom fighters laid down their lives to free their area from the Pakistan forces, the mass graves are still lying uncared for due to sheer neglect of the authorities.

A foundation stone built at a mass grave at Panchdona tells the tale of the situation as it is being used as a truck stand now.

Similar scenes can be viewed at the mass graves at Panchdona Bridge, Shilmandi Masumpur Beel, Khatohara Bridge, Chashirdia in Shibpur, or the graves near Brahmaputra and Arial Kha rivers.

People of Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur celebrated their 43rd freedom day yesterday holding a colourful procession, holding discussion and placing wreaths on the newly constructed memorial.

Hakimpur upazila is now widely known as Hili, reports our correspondent.

Marking the day, Muktijoddha Sangsad of the upazila also organised a rally joined several hundred freedom fighters and local people.



PHOTO: STAR

**The foundation stone of the Liberation War martyrs' memorial at Panchdona mass grave in Narsingdi district is getting ruined due to callous use of the land on the premises by trucks while the work for the memorial sees no progress since laying of the foundation stone in June 2010.**

RFP Ref. No.: LRPS-2014-9116422

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The deadline to submit proposal is 29 December 2014 by 11:00 am.

**Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of solicitation process.**

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### CRIME FOR RANSOM

## Schoolboy escapes clutches of abductors, 3 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police on Wednesday night raided Kedarnagar village in Sadar upazila of Chuadanga district and rescued a schoolboy who was abducted from a market in the town on Monday evening.

Police also arrested three people, Shimul Hossain, 24, son of Abdur Rahman and Asadul Islam, 25, son of late Saker Ali of Sarojganj village, and Ayesha Khatun, 22, wife of Dalim Uddin of Kegarnagar village for their alleged involvement with the abduction.

Police quoting victim's family members said, Sagor Hossain, 15, son of Anwar Hossain of Mortuzapur village, also a Class IX student at Sarojganj High School in the upazila, went to Sarojganj Bazar to buy a SIM card for his mobile phone around 4.00pm on Monday.

Shimul and Azizul, previously known to Sagor, met the latter at the Bazar and took the boy to Dalim's house tactfully and confined him tying his hands, legs and mouth, said

Munshi Asaduzzaman, officer in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Razzak Ali, uncle of the victim, lodged a complaint with Sinduria Police Camp in Sadar upazila the same night.

On Tuesday morning, an unknown caller phoned Abdur Rahman and demanded Tk 11 lakh as ransom for his son's release. Tracking the mobile phone number, police launched a drive but failed to rescue the boy.

On Wednesday evening, around 24-hours after his captivity, Sagor finally managed to free himself from blindfold, ran out of the house and took shelter at an Azizul's house in the same area.

Receiving a phone call from Azizul, police rescued Sagor from his house the same night. Later, police raided the area detained the Shimul, Asadul and Ayesha. Dalim, the mastermind behind the incident Dalim, however, escaped the arrest.

Police yesterday produced the arrestees before a Chuadanga that sent them to jail.

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The deadline to submit proposal is 29 December 2014 by 11:00 am.

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