

Important canal being filled up to construct drain

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

Bakerganj municipality under Barisal district is filling up 300-year-old Jail Canal to construct a drain there.

This construction work has continued for the last two weeks although the tender for the purpose was called without any approval from the authorities concerned, sources said.

The canal connecting Sreemanto and Tulatali rivers was used for transport of accused and convicted prisoners to Barisal Jail, and so, it came to be known as Jail Canal, said freedom fighter Khokon Das of Kalashkati union under Bakerganj upazila.

The canal plays a vital role in disposal of flood

water and save the town from waterlogging, said Maruf, a local businessman.

"The canal was wider but it shrank to 15-20 feet in last 40 years due to filling up by encroachers. Now the municipality is killing the water body, posing the threat of water logging in the area," said Nannu Mia, 70, a local resident.

"Mayor Lokman Hossain Dakua is doing the work for getting personal benefits, without any approval from the municipality or any other authority," said municipality Councillor Mashur Rahman, also a panel mayor.

"Municipality earlier constructed ghatla (stairs) at different places of the canal to facilitate using its water

for washing and cleaning. The canal water was also used for irrigation," he added.

Shahidul Islam, assistant engineer of Bakerganj municipality, said, "The open drain having 5-6 feet width with concrete walls on both sides is being constructed under a project for smooth flow of water disposal."

Mayor Lokman Hossain Dakua, also secretary of Bakerganj upazila AL, said, "The canal was not in use and people continued grabbing and filling it. And so, the municipality decided to construct a concrete drain and culvert at a cost of Tk 59.60 lakh for smooth water disposal and ease road communication."

"We have not taken any

permission from the Directorate of Environment to fill the canal, said the mayor.

Denying his involvement with the construction work, he said, "Contractor Syed Siddik Ahmed doing the construction work as per tender called by the municipality."

Sukumar Biswas, director, directorate of environment office at Barisal, said encroachment and filling of canal is totally restricted by Water Body Act. Bakerganj municipality cannot do that. We will investigate the matter."

Ranjit Dutta, convener of Bakerganj Unnayan Parishad, has demanded freeing the canal and immediate removal of all structures from there.



PHOTO: STAR

The work of filling up the 300-year-old Bakerganj Jail Canal by the municipal authorities in progress to build a drain there. The photo was taken a few days ago.

Extortionists demand toll from cop's family

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Extortionists have demanded Tk 50,000 from the family of a policeman in Chirirbandar upazila of the district.

Sajeda Begum, wife of constable Mukhtiar Azam, who was recently posted in Dhaka, filed a general diary with Chirirbandar Police Station in this connection yesterday.

According to the GD, Sajeda along with her two sons had been living at a rented house in Kotpara area of the upazila town.

On December 9, a gang left an envelope at the door of her house, it added.

A two-page letter in the envelope asked Sajeda to pay Tk 50,000 and gold ornaments as toll.

"The criminals also threatened to kill us if we failed to give the extortion money and gold ornaments," said Sajeda.

College girl rescued after 20 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Twenty days into her abduction, police rescued a college girl from Bakshiganj upazila town on Friday.

The victim hailing from Panatiapara village in the upazila, is a HSC first year student at KU Government College in the area.

Police and family sources said one Saidur, 23, son of Kajol Driver of Malibag area in the upazila, had been giving illicit proposal to the girl for the last several days.

As she turned down the proposal, Saidur along with his few accomplices abducted the girl on her way to college from home on November 23.

On November 25, the victim's father filed an abduction case with Bakshiganj police station against Saidur and some of his cohorts.

On secret information, a police team raided Madhya Bazar area in the town at 9.30pm on Friday and rescued the girl.

However, Saidur managed to flee the scene, sensing the presence of the law enforcers, said Mostasinur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the PS.

Trawler capsizes in Padma

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A stone-laden trawler capsized after being hit by a ferry at Louhajang turning point of Mawa-Kawrakandi route in Padma River yesterday.

Police said, a Shibchar-bond stone-laden trawler 'Khadiza and Tuhin' of Monem Company sank in the river after being hit by ferry 'Thobal' in the morning.

However, workers on the trawler might have swam ashore, said Yunus Ali, sub-inspector at Mawa naval police camp.

Senior officer of Monem Company Abdus Salam said, BIWTA rescue ship Rustom already went to the spot to start operation soon.

Kashem's old radio still reminds the days of '71

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPI, Pabna



PHOTO: STAR

Abul Kashem, who is now at the fag end of his life, still remembers the days of Liberation War whenever he looks at his decades-old radio

Octogenarian Abul Kashem Mollah of Rooppur village in Ishwardi upazila under the district still holds his decades old three brand radio as a prized possession as it helped the locals to hear the BBC news at his tea stall during the turbulent days of the Liberation War.

"Many people thronged Kashem's tea stall to hear the BBC news as they were eager to know about the progress of the Liberation War. The spot, mostly surrounded by jungles, gradually developed into a busy market. Locals call it BBC Bazar," said freedom fighter Md Rashidullah, a residence of Rooppur village.

In early December of 1971, Pakistan occupation army guided by their local collaborators raided Kashem's tea stall, beat him mercilessly and broke the radio.

After the independence, Kashem got the radio repaired.

Kashem, who could not participate in the armed fight during the Liberation War due to family obligations, often helped the freedom fighters in different ways.

"The people from Rooppur, Pakshey, Sahapur and adjoining villages came to my shop to hear the BBC news that seemed authentic during the Liberation War. They also heard programmes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. I got the honour of a freedom fighter as my

radio helped to keep freedom-loving people's morale high.

"I have reached the twilight hours of my life. My beloved wife passed away. Sons and daughters are busy with their own families. Now I want the historic radio to be preserved in the museum," said Kashem, now 85.

Despite suffering from old-age complications, he often makes time to narrate the memories of the Liberation War to the young people.



PHOTO: STAR

The memorial built on the spot at Rehichar where Bir Shrestha Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir embraced martyrdom in 1971.

Nation to recall martyrdom of Bir Shrestha Jahangir today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Nation will recall the memory of Bir Shrestha Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir, one of the seven greatest heroes of the Liberation War, on his 43rd death anniversary today.

On this day in 1971, just two days before the nation's victory, Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir embraced martyrdom in a battle against the Pakistani occupation forces at Rehichar in the district town.

Mohiuddin Jahangir was born on March 6, 1945 at Rahimganj village under Babuganj upazila in Barisal district.

On 5 October, 1967, he joined the armed forces as a cadet at Pakistan Military Academy. Later, Jahangir was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers.

In 1971, Mohiuddin



Bir Shrestha Jahangir

Jahangir was working at the construction field at Karakoram. On June 10, he took a few days' leave and left for the Sialkot border to reach India. He managed to cross the border safely and joined the Liberation War at Mahdipur under Maldah district in then West Bengal.

On July 3, he became a captain of Sector 7. He was given the responsibility to fight on Chapainawabganj

border. On 10 December, 1971, Captain Jahangir along with 50 freedom fighters crossed Mohananda River and engaged in a fierce fight against Pakistan army.

The freedom fighters took position near Rehaichar area in Chapainawabganj town on December 13. The following day, Jahangir went ahead of the defense line and charged grenade into a trench of Pakistan occupation army. But hit by a bullet from Pak army, the valiant freedom fighter died on the spot.

The next day, he was buried near the graveyard of another valiant freedom fighter, Major Nazmul Haque, on the premises of Sonamasjid in presence of Commander of Sector 7 Lt Colonel Kazi Nuruzzaman, other free-

SNIPPETS

Land-related feud kills man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A man was killed in a clash over a piece of disputed land under Sirajdikhan upazila on Friday. The deceased is Babul Khan, 48, son of Biraj Khan of Madhupur village in the upazila. Police and locals said Babul had a long-standing conflict with his nephew Shamim Hasan over the paternal property. On Friday night, the family members held an arbitration where an altercation took place over the land. At one stage, the rival groups beat up Babul mercilessly, leaving him seriously injured. He was rushed to a hospital in Dhaka where the on duty doctors declared him dead. Police arrested Shamim, his mother Hasina Begum and aunt Halima Begum in this connection. A murder case was filed, accusing five people, said OC Yeardous Hasan of Sirajdikhan police station.

7 Jamaat-Shibir men held

UNB, Gaibandha

Police in a special drive arrested seven Jamaat-Shibir men in Palashbari upazila yesterday over Thursday's violence. Majibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Palashbari police station, said a group of leaders and activists of Jamaat-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, brought out a procession on the Dhaka-Rangpur highway on Thursday. The Jamaat-Shibir men swooped on a team of police as the law enforcers obstructed their procession, triggering a clash. At one stage, they snatched away two Chinese rifles and one shotgun from police. Police arrested 14 leaders and activists on the same day.

Two hurt in BCL infighting

UNB, Satkhira

Two activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were injured in a clash between two factions of the party at Shaheed Abdur Razzak Park in Sadar upazila yesterday. Ehsan Habib Ayon, general secretary of the district unit BCL, said Alamgir Hossain, former president of the district unit BCL, along with his supporters swooped on a procession brought out by the district unit BCL around 12.00pm. At one stage, both the groups attacked each other, leaving two BCL men, including Abdul Halim, president of the No. 7 ward unit BCL, injured.

Schoolteacher stabbed to death

UNB, Gopalganj

A schoolteacher was stabbed to death allegedly by her drug addict stepson in Kashiani upazila headquarters on Friday night. The deceased was identified as Shipra Rani Das, 35, wife of Manoj Kumar Mandal. Manir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kashiani police station, said Shipra had an altercation with her drug addict stepson Badhan, a Class X student of Asha Alok Kindergarten School, as he demanded some money from her on Friday afternoon. As she refused to give him the money, Badhan stabbed Shipra with a sharp weapon indiscriminately, leaving her critically injured. She was rushed to Faridpur Medical College Hospital and died on way to Dhaka around 11.00 pm.

Kulaura businessman remains traceless

Shaikupa trader freed

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Three days into the abduction, a businessman of Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar district still remained traceless.

Victim Mahbub F Anwar, 45, hails from Hingajia village in the upazila and is owner of Arrow World Travels in the district town, reports our correspondent.

On December 11, Mahbub was abducted by a gang while returning from the town around midnight, said Enamul Haque, younger brother of the victim.

The family members filed a case and also arranged a press briefing at Moulvibazar Press Club area on Friday.

Contacted, OC of Moulvibazar PS Abdus Salek said, police were raiding different places to rescue Mahbu.

Away in Jhenidah, locals

of Chandpur village in Shaikupa upazila of the district rescued a timber trader from near Chandpur bridge yesterday morning.

Victim Rezaul Islam Babu, 35, is son of Abdul Latif of Putimari village in the upazila, reports our correspondent.

Babu's relatives said, on the Thursday last, Babu went missing at night and his mobile was found switched off.

Later, the abductors took away Tk 12 lakh from him and left him in a turmeric field of the village tying his hands and legs.

Babu said, he collected the amount from business centre in Kushtia. On the way home he was abducted by a gang.

Yesterday at around 8:00 in the morning, locals heard his screams and rescued him and later sent him to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital for treatment.



PHOTO: STAR

Although a memorial was built on the spot of massacre, the mass graveyard at Bahola in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur district still bears the signs of utter neglect.

Bahola people recall brutal killing of 32 by Pak army

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

'Bahola tragedy day' was observed in Biral upazila of the district yesterday.

During the Liberation War in 1971, Pakistan occupation army and their collaborators massacred at least 32 people at Bahola village.

Remembering the victims a memorial was built in 2012 at the spot, but the graveyard still remains in utter neglect.

During a visit to the spot, this correspondent found that the mass graveyard getting damaged while cattle, goats and dogs mov-

ing freely in the area. The surrounded walls of the graveyard also mostly collapsed.

Like every year, people of Biral upazila observe the day by holding different programmes including discussion, offering prayers at mosques and temples.

According to the eyewitnesses and family members, at least 32 people were brutally killed by Pakistani troops at Bahola with the help of their Bangladeshi collaborators on the day.

Later, the bodies were dumped in a ditch at the village, they said.

Local elderly people said, the Pakistani troops started

to retreat from Bchaganj upazila toward Birganj and Dinajpur as the upazila was freed on December 6 after a fierce fighting with Indian troops and freedom fighters.

On December 12 night, the Pakistani troops entered Bahola and asked the villagers to help nab the freedom fighters of the area as there were two freedom fighter camps at Bahola and Palashbari villages, said villager Rafiqul Islam.

As the villagers declined to provide any information regarding the freedom fighters, the Pakistani troops and their collaborators on December 13 carried out the brutal killing.