

Random sand lifting from river poses erosion threat

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Four sand traders have continued sand lifting from three spots within five kilometres of the Bangalee River in Nimgachhi union of Dhunat upazila under the district for one month, threatening croplands and dwellings on the both banks of the river.

Visiting the locations a few days ago, it was found that men of Kamrul Islam and Sujan Mia were using

two shallow machines at Dhalirghat for lifting sand, creating large holes in the riverbed.

Sand lifters Shakil Mahmud and Tariqul Islam have also set shallow machines one km and three km upstream of the river and continued lifting huge amount of hand for selling in the town for high prices.

Locals seeking anonymity said they dare not protest the harmful act as the sand

lifters are influential people in the area.

This correspondent failed to contact the sand lifters as their cell phones remained off.

Contacted, Sujaudoula Ripon, chairman of Nimgachhi union parishad, said,

"Ignoring our forbiddance, the sand lifters have continued the callous act, posing threat of erosion. Besides, the government is being

deprived of huge amount of revenue due to the illegal sand lifting."

Hafizur Rahman, upazila nirbahi officer of Dhunat, said except the government-approved sand lifting zone of Bererbari area of the river, there is no permission for lifting sand from any location in the upazila.

"I will send an official to see the matter and legal action will be taken against the illegal sand lifters," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Illegal sand lifting by shallow engines from the Bangalee River at Dhaliakandi Ghat in Dhunat upazila under Bogra district creates deep holes in the water body, posing threat of land collapse and erosion in the area.

SNIPPETS

Robber held with bombs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Members of the Rapid action Battalion (Rab) arrested a robber and seized three bombs and a sharp weapon from his possession in Gangni upazila of Meherpur district early yesterday. Abdur Razzak, commander of Rab-6 in Gangni, said the elite force, acting on a tip-off, raided the house of Ziarul Islam at Chorgoal village at around 3:30am and arrested him. Rab personnel seized the bombs and the weapon from him. The Rab commander said Ziarul was wanted in seven robbery cases filed with Gangni Police Station. Ziarul was yesterday produced in a Meherpur court that sent him to jail.

Idols vandalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Criminals vandalised five idols of Maizpara Kali Temple in Tindokan area of Sreenagar upazila in Munshiganj district early yesterday. Maizpara Kali Temple President Dulal Mandal said, "Everything was all right when we left the temple last night. A sweeper found the idols vandalised when he came in the morning." Munshiganj Superintendent of Police (SP) Biplob Bijoy Talukder said criminals vandalised the idols at night. Police are investigating the incident and trying to arrest the culprits involved, he added.

They won't

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though many paid fees and service charges several months ago.

Asked whether the government contacted the ICAO for extension of the deadline, the home minister said he did not know anything in this regard.

Kamal also contradicted the foreign minister as to how many haven't got the MRPs.

Speaking on the issue in parliament on Thursday, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali put the number at over 11 lakh.

The Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP) could not specify the exact number, but its Director General Zeaul Alam told reporters that the number would not be more than 2.5 lakh.

The home minister too relied on the DIP data and claimed, "Our figure is correct."

However, officials at different Bangladesh missions abroad said the DIP estimate was incorrect.

At least three to four lakh expatriates in Saudi Arabia, around one lakh in the United Arab Emirates, around one or two lakh in Malaysia and several lakhs in some other countries did not get the MRPs, according to the officials.

Without the MRPs, the expatriates would face trouble in renewing their work permits and getting work visas. They might even lose their jobs and face deportation.

The civil aviation and tourism ministry on several occasions urged the home ministry to apply to the ICAO for extending time for the Bangladeshis but the home minister opposed it, said a senior official at the civil aviation ministry.

"He [the minister] was confident that they would be able to complete the job before the deadline," he said, seeking anonymity.

The home ministry and the DIP last year appointed an inexperienced and incompetent outsourcing company, IRIS Corporation Bhd, to enrol expatriates in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Malaysia for the MRPs.

The company enrolled only around 2 lakh expatriates in the three countries but did not distribute around 50,000 MRPs in Saudi Arabia and several thousand more in the other two countries even though the Bangladeshis had paid fees and service charge.

Neither the DIP nor the home ministry took any action against the IRIS for its failure.

ARSON CASE

11 BNP men sent to jail on surrender

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Barisal court yesterday rejected the bail prayers of 11 leaders and activists of BNP Agailjhara upazila unit in an arson case and sent them to jail.

They are accused in a case for setting fire to BRTC bus and a goods-laden truck in the upazila during the countrywide blockade enforced by the BNP-led 20-party alliance on January 13 and February 8 this year.

The BNP men surrendered to the District and

Sessions Judge's Court at noon and sought bail. Judge Anwarul Haque rejected their bail petition and sent them to prison.

The accused are Agailjhara upazila BNP leaders Ashish Baroi and Razzak Faokir, Chhatra Dal President Hemayet Talukder, General Secretary, Kamrul Islam Jewel Molla, upazila Sramik Dal President, Shamsul Haque Khokon, and BNP activists Mizan Molla, Bachchu Molla, Anowar Hossain Anu, Shipon Howlader, Milon Molla, and Mizanur Rahaman.

5 siblings get life for murder in Netrakona

UNB, Netrakona

A court here yesterday sentenced five siblings to life imprisonment for killing a man in Kalmakanda upazila of the district in 1998.

The lifers are Tahmina alias Taknama, Dulal, Haidar, Chan Mia and Raihan--sons and daughter of late Abdul Mannaf.

Of them, Tahmina, Dulal and Haider were tried in absentia.

The court also fined the convicts Tk 20,000 each. In default, they are to suffer two years more in jail.

According to the prosecution, there was a dispute between Akhtar Ali, 30, son of Meser Ali of Panchgaon

village, with his neighbour Abdus Salam over the ownership of a land at the village.

As a sequel to the dispute, Salam's supporters along with the convicts attacked Akhtar's house on November 25, 1998 and killed him.

Aruna Khatun, younger sister of Akhtar Ali, filed a case with Kalmakanda Police Station the following day.

Police pressed charges against 18 people on April 12, 1999.

After examining the case record and eight witnesses, Additional District and Sessions Judge Abdul Hamid pronounced the verdict. The judge acquitted 13 others as charges brought against them could not be proved.

Over 6 lakh Indian bidis seized, one arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulovibazar

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a man and seized over six lakh Indian bidis worth Tk13.66 lakh from Nalua area under Doarabazar upazila of Sunamganj district yesterday. The arrestee is Abdul Mannan, 30, son of late Iman

Ali of Bagherkuna village.

Receiving information that a large consignment of Indian bidis was smuggled into Bangladesh, a team of Rab-9 launched a drive in Nalua area at around 10:00am.

Sensing the presence of the elite force, the smugglers fled the scene, leaving the bidis in a field. Later, Rab members seized the bidis.

Bid to abduct schoolgirl in Chandpur, two held

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Police on Monday night detained two alleged kidnappers from Chandpur launch terminal while they were trying to abduct a 14-year-old schoolgirl.

The arrestees are Touhidul Islam, 22, son of Shahjahan Bepari of Baniakandi village in Hajiganj upazila, and Riad, 19, son of Abdul Khaleq of the village.

Sub-inspector Omar Faruk of Sadar Model Police Station said the duo forcibly picked up the girl, also a Class IX student at Rampur High School, when she went out of their home at the same village to respond to the call of nature around 8:00pm on Monday.

They also threatened the girl saying that they would hurl acid at her face if she shouted for help.

The gang then took her to Chandpur launch terminal in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw.

Victim's father Dulal Bepari filed a case with Hajiganj Police Station the same night.

Seeing the trio's suspicious movement at the launch terminal, police detained them and rescued the girl around 11:45pm. They were handed over to Hajiganj Police Station around 1:30am.

The two alleged abductors were yesterday produced before a court that sent them to jail.

Cop's wife, daughter found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Police yesterday recovered the bodies of wife and daughter of a policeman of Sundarganj Police Station from Bamomjol under Sundarganj municipality.

The dead are Krishna Roy, 25, wife of Constable Parimol Chandra Roy, and his two-year-old daughter Nibedity Roy Arpita.

Parimol said he woke up in the morning and found Arpita dead and his wife hanging from the ceiling of the kitchen.

Being informed, police went to Parimol's rented house, recovered the bodies and sent them to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Parimol is a resident of Akashneel village in Pirganj upazila of Thakurgaon district, and Krishna's father's house is in Kalitoal village in the upazila.

Locals said family feud might be the reason for the deaths.

Contacted, Israil Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Sundarganj Police station said he won't say anything about the matter until the autopsy report is received.

An unnatural death case was filed with the police station concerned, the OC added.

Van-puller strangled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police recovered the body of a van puller from a field in Chawk-Dublia village of the district yesterday morning.

The victim is Md Shahabuddin, 22, son of Md Monirul Islam of Sardiar village in Pabna Sadar upazila.

Abdulla Al Hassan, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station, said locals found the body of the victim in a field at the village at around 8:00pm. On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body.

"The victim was strangled at sometime on Monday night," the OC said.

Quoting family sources, police said Shahabuddin went out of his house along with his friends on Monday afternoon, and was missing since then.

Shahabuddin's family members alleged that he was killed by his friends.



PHOTO: STAR

A batch of 157 people of Dasiarchhara (a former Indian enclave) in Phulbari upazila of Kurigram line up at Baghbandar-Sahebganj check post in Bhurungamari upazila of the district yesterday to cross the Indian border to have a new home in the neighbouring country. The initiative was taken as part of the authorities' arrangement according to the option of the enclave people following implementation of India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement on July 31 this year.

FORMER ENCLAVES

288 more go to India

STAR COUNTRY DESK

As part of the process to relocate former enclave dwellers, 288 people of three enclaves-- two in Kurigram and another in Panchagarh districts-- went to India yesterday.

In the second batch, 157 people of 29 families from now-defunct enclave Dashiarsara of Phulbari upazila in Kurigram got together on the playground of Sheikh Fajilatunnesa Dakhil Madrasa and started their journey with goods by five mini-buses and 24 pick-up vans to Bhagvandar-Sahebganj border check post in Bhurungamari upazila of the district around 10:00am.

On the way, an enclave dweller of now-defunct enclave Soto-Garoljhar in Bhurungamari upazila joined the journey, reports our correspondent.

After completing immigration at the check post, they entered India around 1:00pm. The India-bound people were bidden good-

bye with sweets, flowers and gifts before crossing the border.

Rafiqul Islam Selim, additional deputy commissioner (revenue), Lt Col Jakir Hossain, commanding officer of BGB-45, Md Shahab Uddin, additional superintendent of police, Nasir Uddin Mahmud, Phulbari upazila nirbahi officer, and Abu Hayat, Bhurungamari UNO, among others, were present there.

The district administration sources said a total of 230 people of 45 families of three former Indian enclaves went to India in the two terms while 305 enclave people were interested to take Indian citizenship during the India-Bangladesh joint survey team on July 6 to July 16 this year.

The 305 people were issued India travel passes for going to India. But of them, 70 people of two former enclaves in Kurigram have appealed for living in Bangladesh to the Indian high commissioner through

the deputy commissioner, the sources said.

In Panchagarh, 130 people of 30 families from Dahala Khagrabari enclave in Debiganj upazila of the district left for India through Chilahati-Haldibari route the same day, reports our Thakurgaon correspondent.

After completion of all formalities, Additional Deputy Magistrate Golam Azam formally handed over the 130 people to First Secretary of Indian High Commission of Bangladesh Rama Kanta Gupta at checking and loading point at Debiganj Degree College ground around 9:00am. UNO Shafiqul Islam was present there.

Sub-Divisional Officer of Mekliganj sub-division in Cooch Behar district, West Bengal Ranjan Kumar Jha and other officials received the people at the entry point of the border in the afternoon.

A touching scene emerged at the ground of the college when the vehicles carrying the people started for India.

22 drug peddlers vow to start fresh life

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR

TOPU, Pabna

Twenty-two drug peddlers of Ishwardi upazila under the district promised to give up the crime and motivate others to do the same as the district police administration organised a programme welcoming them to a 'new life' at Locoshed football ground yesterday afternoon.

Earlier on October 3, 24 drug peddlers of Majhgram area of the same upazila surrendered to police to return to normal life, thanks to the motivational programme of the law enforcers.

"Drug trade and abuse remained a serious problem

in Ishwardi upazila for long. The 22 drug peddlers surrendered to police with a promise to give up the crime as alongside drives, the law enforcers continued motivation programmes to free the area from the menace," said Biman Kumar Das, officer in charge (OC) of Ishwardi Police Station.

"Family members and neighbours hated me due to my involvement in drug peddling. Besides, I remained worried about possible harassment by police. Finally I have decided to give up drug peddling," Delwar Hossain Delu said after surrendering to police yesterday.

He and 22 other drug peddlers who surrendered

to police yesterday also took oath to inspire others to refrain from drug abuse.

Hailing from Locoshed area of Ishwardi upazila, they were accused in several cases related to drug peddling and its abuse, police said.

"Police will continue drives as well as motivational programmes against drug trade and its abuse. At the same time, people should come forward to build social awareness to free the society from the menace," Pabna Superintendent of Police Md Alamgir Kabir said in his speech as chief guest at the programme presided over by Ishwardi OC Biman Kumar Das.



PHOTO: STAR

Twenty-two drug peddlers of Ishwardi upazila under Pabna district pledge to leave the crime and motivate others to refrain from drug abuse as the district police administration organised a programme welcoming them to a 'fresh life' at Locoshed football ground in the upazila yesterday afternoon.