



Users of this awfully dilapidated road stretching 32 kilometres from Sylhet to Bholaganj via Companiganj, can now hope for end of their ordeal within a couple of years as the government has finally taken an initiative to renovate the important road, upgrading it to a national highway.

32-km Sylhet road to be upgraded to nat'l highway

Deal signed with firm as govt to spend Tk 442cr for renovating the battered road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government is going to upgrade Airport-Salutikar-Companiganj-Bholaganj road, one of the battered roads in Sylhet, to a national highway to facilitate the smooth transport of stone and sand.
An agreement was signed between the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) and the construction firm at a hotel in the capital yesterday for the upgradation work of the 32-

kilometre road at a cost of Tk 442 crore, says a press release of the road transport and bridges ministry.
RHD's Additional Chief Engineer in Sylhet zone Iftekhar Kabir, also the project director, and Khan Mohammad Aftab Uddin, managing director of construction firm Spectra Engineers Ltd, inked the deal on behalf of their respective sides.
The government will bear the cost of the work, and the construction firm will have

to complete the work within 34 months as per the deal.
Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid were present at the signing ceremony.
Highlighting the importance of the road, the finance minister said the road is being used for carrying stone by heavy trucks every day. Therefore, it has to be constructed with due

importance, he said.
Muhith stressed the need of completing the upgradation work by 34 months and asked the local representatives to monitor the work to ensure quality, the press release added.
He said the construction firm concerned would be responsible for the maintenance of the road for next three years after completion of the work.
"The government wants to ensure it," he said.



Litchi grower Abdur Rahim at his orchard at Chandipur village in Gobindaganj upazila under Gaibandha district.

Litchi cultivation gaining popularity in Gaibandha

Growers claim they avoid chemicals, use natural pesticides

AKM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha
A good number of farmers of Sadullapur, Palashbari and Gobindaganj upazilas under the district are now cultivating litchi, switching from traditional crops like paddy, jute or wheat as the popular summer fruit brings better profit.
Besides, the fruit cultivation eventually requires less effort as after initial investment for planting saplings in orchards and nursing for a couple of years, the mature trees yield fruits for many years.
During the ongoing peak harvesting season, traders from other districts are coming to collect the fruit from gardens in the area.
Visiting Chandipur village in Gobindaganj upazila, this correspondent saw the family members of litchi

growers collecting fruits from orchards, making bundles each with a hundred pieces of ripe fruit and putting it into bamboo cases for wholesale.
At least 20 families of the village are involved in litchi farming for the last five years, growing hybrid, Bombai, Chaina-3 and Bedana varieties of the fruit although litchi tree was seen rarely in the area only a few years ago.
"I started litchi cultivation seven years ago. Now I have 30 trees on 25 decimals of land. This season I earned Tk 50,000 from selling litchi and expect Tk 30,000 more from remaining fruits in the orchard," said Abdur Rahim of Chandipur village.
"Instead of chemicals for controlling pests and diseases, we use natural elements like ash or herbal pesticide and getting good result. A big litchi tree

produces 6,000 to 8,000 fruits yearly, while a medium size tree gives 4,000 to 5,000 fruits," said Afsal Hossain, another grower.
Chemical-free litchi has good demand in the market and price is also higher as consumers are now much aware, said locals.
Earlier in the season, litchi sold for Tk 200 to Tk 250 per hundred pieces, but now the price ranges from Tk 150 to Tk 200, they said.
"In Gaibandha district, over a thousand hectares of land has been brought under fruit cultivation, mostly mango and litchi. We provide the growers all possible help for better yield and motivate them not to use chemicals on fruits," said AKM Ruhul Amin, deputy director, the Department of Agriculture Extension, Gaibandha.

ARSON CASE Gaibandha BNP chief lands in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha
A court here on Monday sent the president of Gaibandha district unit of BNP to jail after he surrendered before the court in an arson case.
The court had earlier issued an arrest warrant against BNP leader Anisuzzaman Khan Babu in a case for setting fire to a passenger bus during the BNP-led alliance's country-wide blockade last year. He had been absconding since filing of the case.
Anisuzzaman surrendered before the court of Special Tribunal and Sessions Judge Rasheda Sultana. His lawyer submitted a bail petition before the court, which sent the accused to jail, rejecting the bail petition.

The district BNP and its front organisations brought out a procession in the town yesterday, demanding immediate release of Anisuzzaman.

Jubo Samity activist murdered in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban
An activist of Jubo Samity, a youth wing of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), was found murdered in Bandarban's Sadar upazila early yesterday.
The deceased was identified as Sunil Chakma, 35, information and publicity secretary of Kibuk Para unit of Jubo Samity.
Nu Thui Ching Marma, wife of the victim, said Sunil went out of their house with Maigya Marma, a neighbour, at around 2:00am.
"As he did not return home, I went to search for him near our house and found him dead with injury marks on his neck and face," she said.
Police recovered the body and sent it to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for autopsy.
Police arrested Maigya Marma, suspecting his involvement in the killing, said Rafiq Ullah officer-in-charge of Bandarban Sadar Police Station.
Contacted, U Chaw Shing Marma, president of Bandarban Sadar unit of PCJSS, claimed that Sunil was killed by his political opponents. He demanded immediate arrest of the killers.
Two days ago, Sunil locked in an altercation with the supporters of AL nominated candidate over campaigning for the coming union parishad elections scheduled for June 4.

DEATH IN CUSTODY Probe body formed in Jamalpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur
A three-member probe body, headed by Additional Police Superintendent of the district Md Shariful Haque, was formed to investigate death of arrestee Hashem Ali under police custody in Sarishabari upazila of the district on Monday.
The probe body has been asked to submit its report within three days, said Superintendent of Police Nizam Uddin.
Hashem, 35, son of late Jinnat Ali of Tariapara under Sarishabari municipality was accused in a murder case filed with Sarishabari Police Station in connection with his wife's killing. He was arrested on Sunday from his cousin's house in the capital's Gulshan area where he had been hiding, according to police.
Family members alleged that he died due to custodial torture, and demanded that "policemen responsible for the killing" be brought to justice.

Sundarbans robber gang 'Master Bahini' surrenders

UNB, Bagerhat
Ten members of Sundarbans-based infamous robber gang 'Master Bahini,' including its ringleader, surrendered to Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in presence of Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal in Mongla yesterday.
All the robbers formally surrendered with 52 firearms and 5,000 bullets around 3:00pm, said Lt Col Md Faridul Alam, commanding officer of Rab-8.
The 10 gang members are Mostafa Sheikh alias Kader Master, 46, ringleader of the robber gang, Mohammad Sultan Khan, 58, Mohammad Sohagh Akon,

37, Mohammad Fazlu Sheikh, 35, Mohammad Solaiman Sheikh, 28, Mohammad Shahin Sheikh, 28, Mohammad Sumon Sarker, 34, Harun, 24, Arif Sardar, 22, and Asadul Islam Kokil, 27.
Col Anwar Latif Khan, additional director general of Rab; Lt Col Md Faridul Alam, commanding officer of Rab-8; Khandaker Rafiqul Islam, commanding officer of Khulna-6 Rab, and M o h a m m a d Maniruzzaman, deputy inspector general of police, Khulna Range, were present on the occasion.
The minister said the government will provide all support to those robbers

who surrendered. Rab and the law enforcing agencies will continue their drives in the Sundarbans, he added.
Earlier, the robber gang was scheduled to surrender on Sunday. However, the formal surrender was postponed as the home minister could not attend the programme due to inclement weather.
Mostafa, hailing from Mongla upazila in Bagerhat district, formed the gang 'Master Bahini' several years ago.
They used to attack trawlers of fishermen, golpata and wood cutters and honey collectors and abduct fishermen for ransom in deep forests of the Sundarbans.



Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal receives arms surrendered by members of Sundarbans-based robber gang 'Master Bahini' at a programme arranged by Rapid Action Battalion at Mongla under Bagerhat district yesterday. Ten members of the infamous gang surrendered and pledged to lead normal life on the occasion, thanks to the massive operations and motivational campaigns by the law enforcers.

Bogra's Nawab Palace saved

Govt decision brings jubilation

MAMUN-UR-RASHID with ANDREW EAGLE
Following a protracted campaign by Bogra civil society activists to preserve the town's iconic Nawab palace a signboard from the archaeological department is finally in place marking its protection as a designated site.
Also the home of Mohammad Ali, who became prime minister of an undivided Pakistan in 1953, preservation of the 150-year-old residence appeared to be at risk when the property was suddenly

sold in mid-April to a group of local businessmen.
Subsequent demonstrations and written appeals by locals urged the government to protect the palace as a matter of priority.
After the cultural affairs ministry determined the site to be of significant heritage value warranting protection, a gazette notification was published recording the inclusion of the property as being protected under the Antiquities Act 1968.
On Wednesday 25 May 2016 a signboard to this effect with the gazette noti-

fication papers was finally installed on-site, bringing jubilation to much of Bogra town.
Abdur Razzak, convenor of Bogra district's archaeological sites preservation committee which has been integral to the preservation campaign expressed deep contentment with the government's efforts.
Similarly, town residents from different walks of life are greatly satisfied at the positive response of ministry of the cultural affairs in preserving the palace.



The government has finally arranged protection of this 150-year-old Nawab Palace, also the ancestral home of former undivided Pakistan prime minister Mohammad Ali, as an archaeological site, following a protracted campaign by civil society activists.