

# One collapsed bridge affects thousands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

In broad daylight, a sand-laden cargo vessel hit one of the pillars of a bridge while crossing a canal in Kalaskathi of Bakerganj upazila, causing the bridge to collapse on the vessel.

Kalaskathi's road communications with nearby Bagdia, Kabai, Lakkhpasha, Nalua, Dhaparkathi, Kochnagar, and Dudhal villages have remained snapped since the accident.

It has affected the lives of around 50,000 people.

Quoting locals, Sub-Inspector Hanif of Bakerganj Police Station said ML Sonartari hit one of the pillars of the bridge around 11:30am on Friday.

Those inside the vessel were unhurt and managed to swim ashore. They fled the area later.

He said the bridge would be repaired once the concrete slabs are removed from the top of the submerged vessel.

Locals, however, have demanded a new bridge.

Rupok Chandra Paul, a businessman, said his business has been hit hard by the accident.

Another local, Abdullah Alamin, a fish trader, said he was incurring losses too. Such traders used the bridge to transport their goods to other places.



A portion of a bridge collapses on a sand-laden vessel after the vessel hit the bridge over a canal in Kalaskathi of Barisal on Friday severing road communication. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Hasina writes to Obama

Mourns Ali's death

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a message to US President Barack Obama yesterday expressed her condolences to the bereaved family of Muhammad Ali, who was also an honorary citizen of Bangladesh.

"I am profoundly saddened at the unfortunate demise of the US and global boxing legend Muhammad Ali [Inna lillahi wa inna ilahi rajiu] last night [June 3]."

"On behalf of the people and the government of Bangladesh, I convey our deepest condolence to you [Obama] and through you to the members of the bereaved family and to the people of the United States."

One of the greatest sports icons of all time, Muhammad Ali, has long been a household name in Bangladesh and is regarded with great respect and passion by its people for his extraordinary talent and skills in boxing, and also for his bold voice to uphold the dignity of all human beings and challenge all wrongs.

"He was a bridge between our two friendly countries and would remain so for generations to come. The people of Bangladesh would always remember their brother, Muhammad Ali, with love and reverence."

Hasina also prayed for the salvation of his departed soul.

Ali died at the age of 74 yesterday.

# No one in BNP to give reactions

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Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury -- used to give reactions to national budgets on the party's behalf.

While the party was in opposition between 2009 and 2013, it placed "budget thoughts" through a press conference before the placing of budget proposal in parliament, in addition to giving post-budget reactions. In the last two years, they did not place "budget thoughts" but duly gave post-budget reactions.

This time, the BNP is yet to make responses formally though four days have gone by after the finance minister

placed the budget proposal in parliament.

Most of the party leaders who used to give expert opinions on budgets have either become inactive in the political arena or fallen sick or are staying out of the country, party sources said.

Osman Faruk, an adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, is not appearing in public and has remained inactive in the party activities since early last month when the investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal decided to launch a probe into the charges brought against him.

Another key man, BNP standing committee member MK Anwar who came out of jail in April has been suffering from different diseases, said Sairul Kabir Khan, a staff of BNP chairperson's mediawing.

BNP standing committee member Moyeen Khan is now visiting the US on an invitation of the Democratic Party to observe the country's presidential election, Sairul added.

Amir Khashru is also in the US now, party sources said.

On instructions of the BNP chief, Dhaka University Prof Mahub Ullah is

preparing budget reactions on behalf of the party, BNP sources said.

The party may come up with its delayed reactions to the proposed budget after BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir returns to Dhaka today from Dinajpur, according to a party source.

Although there was no formal reaction from the BNP, its Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed yesterday at a press briefing at the party's Nayapaltn central office described the proposed budget as "anti-people and pro-plunderers."

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champion of the world who said he could "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

Ali, who came of age amid the turmoil of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, dazzled the boxing world as a youngster with his speed, never before seen in his weight class.

He also rattled the established order with an equally quick wit and colorful personality that lifted him into the realm of super-stardom and ushered in the age of globally televised multi-million-dollar fights.

The legendary fighter spent his last years ravaged by Parkinson's disease but never retreated from public view.

Instead he added a crusade against the illness to the list of battles of his extraordinary life.

ROCKY ROAD TO STARDOM  
The rise of Ali -- born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr in Louisville, Kentucky on January 17, 1942 -- to the status of sports icon was not a smooth one.

His conversion to Islam in 1964, announced when he was fresh from victory over Sonny Liston for his first heavyweight world title, deeply disturbed white America.

His decision to change his name from what he called his "slave name" of Cassius Clay was derided.

But that was nothing compared to the outrage that greeted his refusal to join the armed forces in 1967 on the grounds that he was a Muslim minister.

Only 25 years old, he was convicted of draft dodging, stripped of his title and banished from boxing.

He was allowed to resume his career in 1970, but feelings were slow to heal. An unidentified man interviewed on camera in 1971 spoke for many when he called Ali's impending title fight with Joe Frazier "a disgrace."

"I have no interest in this fight at all," the man said. "In fact, the reason is this fellow they call Clay, or Muhammad Ali, or whatever he wants to call himself, is a disgrace to the nation."

Ali suffered his first professional defeat in that fight, on March 8, 1971 at Madison Square Garden.

On the same day, the US military was ordering investigations into charges that American soldiers had murdered Vietnamese civilians at My Lai.

A few months later, on June 28 of that year, the Supreme Court voted 8-0 to overturn Ali's draft dodging conviction.

"They did what they thought was right, and I did what I thought was right," Ali said of the government's long struggle to imprison him.

That battle left its mark on Ali both inside and outside the ring.

In the 1960s, Ali relied on speed and reflexes, taking risks that other fighters would have paid dearly for.

After his enforced absence, he was a slower, craftier fighter, but one who still flouted the rule book and got away with it.

EPIC FIGHTS

In 1974, Ali set his sights on a second world title, promising the greatest miracle "since the resurrection of Christ."

In boxing terms, he delivered when he knocked out George Foreman in the eighth round in Kinshasa, Zaire -- the famed "Rumble in the Jungle" -- to regain the title taken from him in 1976.

Eleven months later, he triumphed in the "Thrilla in Manila" -- an epic 14-round battle with Frazier that ended when Frazier failed to answer the bell for the 15th round.

Although the two were bitter rivals in the ring -- and sometimes out of it -- Ali was among the mourners at Frazier's funeral in November 2011.

Ali's courage and the strength of his chin kept him standing under brutal onslaughts that would have felled other fighters.

He once said he reckoned he had taken 29,000 punches, and his ability to withstand such punishment no doubt contributed to the Parkinson's disease from which he suffered in later years.

"What I suffered physically was worth what I've accomplished in life," he said in 1992. "A man who is not courageous enough to take risks will never accomplish anything in life."

Ali lost the heavyweight title to unheralded Leon Spinks on February 15, 1978, but won it back in a rematch in September the same year, becoming the first three-time heavyweight world champion.

But the accomplishments he cherished later in life were outside the ring.

He used his popularity to spread the word of Islam, giving fans his autobiography on religious pamphlets.

"Boxing made me famous," he said. "This is the real thing. My main purpose in life is to be the world's greatest ambassador, to spread the word of Islam."

In doing so, Ali also opened a window on the world for black Americans, US civil rights campaigners said.

"Ali helped to internationalize black consciousness as much as anybody," said the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

"He has given people all over the world a sense of pride," said Andrew Young, a civil rights activist and former US ambassador to the United Nations. "Oppressed people and people of color have been able to identify with him."

GLOBAL ICON

Ali's stature as a global icon was confirmed with his poignant appearance at the opening ceremony of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, where he lit the cauldron.

Nine years later, in November 2005, then president George W. Bush awarded Ali the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor.

Even as his physical capacities diminished -- his gait becoming more shuffling and his speech more hesitant -- Ali's public life continued.

In 2002, he appeared with his wife, Lonnie, before Congress to press for more funding for Parkinson's disease research.

Ali, who was named a UN messenger of peace in 1998, continued to involve himself in various charitable ventures, and he campaigned for boxing reform, calling for a national body to oversee the sport he loved.

In 2002, he visited Afghanistan to raise awareness of the problems still faced there after the fall of the Taliban regime.

By that time Ali was already familiar with the role of overseas envoy, having visited five African nations in 1980 on behalf of president Jimmy Carter.

In 1990, on the eve of the Gulf War, he travelled to Iraq and met Saddam Hussein in an independent effort to promote peace in the region.

He was credited with securing the release of 15 US hostages.

One of the hostages, Harry Brill-Edwards, told an Ali biographer: "I've always known that Muhammad Ali was a super sportsman. But during those hours that we were together, inside that enormous body, I saw an angel."

# Deadliest polls end

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correspondents.

They got locked in fierce clashes, and chase and counter-chase during the voting that began at 8:00am and ended at 4:00pm without any break.

With yesterday's voting, elections to around 4,000 union parishads, the lowest tier of local governments, came to an end.

In Mymensingh, a man died and 25 others were injured in election violence at a polling station in Saltia union of Gafargaon upazila.

The dead was identified as Shahjahan Mia, 52, from Bagua village. Three critically wounded persons were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, reports

hit.

Police, however, couldn't confirm whether the three were injured in police firing or in fight between rival groups.

Shahjahan, cousin of a member candidate, fell ill during the clash and was taken to his house close to the polling centre, said the OC.

As his condition worsened, he was taken to Gafargaon Upazila Health Complex where he died around 3:15pm, he said.

The cause of his death would be confirmed after autopsy, said the OC.

No case was filed and none was

placed the budget proposal in parliament. Most of the party leaders who used to give expert opinions on budgets have either become inactive in the political arena or fallen sick or are staying out of the country, party sources said.

At one stage, Kamal's supporters opened fire and attacked their rivals with sharp weapons, they said.

Arafat and seven others suffered bullet and stab wounds. They were rushed to Noakhali General Hospital.

As Arafat's condition deteriorated, doctors there referred him to Dhaka Medical college Hospital. He died on the way to the DMCH.

UP POLLS	
TOTAL UPS -	698
RESULTS -	634
AL	375
BNP	60
OTHERS	199

arrested in this connection.

In Noakhali, a Chhatra League leader was killed and seven ruling party men were injured in a clash between supporters of two rival member candidates at Bholanagar Mohammadia Ebtadai Madrasa Centre in sadar upazila.

The dead, Yasir Arafat 26, son of Mohammad Selim of Bholanagar village, was a ward-level BCL general secretary.

Newazpur Union BCL President Yasin Palash said all the injured are involved with the BCL.

In Feni, a man was shot dead and 28 people were wounded -- 20 of them bullet-hit -- in violence at different polling centres in Sonagazi upazila, reports UNB.

The dead, Nur Hossain Shipon, 22, son of Abdul Karim, was a resident of Dakkhin Char Kandia union of the upazila.

Around 10:00am, a clash erupted between the supporters of AL-backed chairman candidate Mosharrif Hossain and BNP-backed candidate Shamsuddin Khokan at Tofael Ahmed High School polling



A polling agent signing a ballot before handing it over to a voter at Bajalia Durgabari Polling Centre in Chittagong's Satkania union during yesterday's UP elections. The voters at the centre were only given the ballot papers for member candidates. The white ballot paper for chairman candidates was not given.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

our correspondent.

Quoting locals, Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Gafargaon Police Station, said two member candidates' supporters with firearms and sharp weapons clashed at Pukuria Government Primary School polling station around 2:30pm.

On information, police and BGB personnel rushed to the spot and fired some 70 shots to bring the situation under control.

At least 25 people were wounded in the clash -- three of them bullet-