

Road to Jaflong in neglect for 4 years

MINTU DESHWARA, from Jaflong

The rocky floor of the Piyain River is clearly seen from the surface. It flows from the verdant hills of Meghalaya, just across the border. It is a meeting point of the river and hills. It is Jaflong.

Despite having all the beautiful features, a recent visitor has a different reaction.

"I won't visit the place again," said Moinul Islam.

He came to Jaflong Sunday with family. But the terrible road conditions ruined his trip.

"We think our district is neglected in every aspect. But when I visited Jaflong and saw the awful road, I thought Khulna is a heaven," he told The Daily Star.

An estimated five thousand people, according to local residents, flock to Jaflong every day, and their biggest fear is the 3km Tamabil-Jaflong road.

Taking a motorcycle ride, this correspondent reached Jaflong from Tamabil in 30 minutes, while it should have taken only a few minutes.

The 3km stretch is barely recognisable as a road: the asphalt is gone, large potholes collecting water are dotting the road, and mud (and dust during summer) flies off vehicle wheels.

"It's in a pathetic state," said local truck driver Modorish Ali as he described the road.

A journalist based in Jaintapur upazila, Sabbir Ahmed, said the road was in the worst condition at Tamabil, Mohammadpur, Borlaghat, and Mamardokan points.

"After a huge protest, the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) did brick soling (laying of bricks) three months ago. But it did not last. It was broken a few days ago," he said.

For local bus driver Jasim Uddin, it is difficult to drive on the road. But he thinks it is even more troublesome for outsiders.

Bus drivers from faraway places often find their vehicles damaged, he said.

Rahman Miah, a tea stall owner at Tamabil, said, "A lot of journalists took photos of the area and wrote about this road. But the government didn't take any initiative."



Most of the 3km Tamabil-Jaflong road in Sylhet is dotted with craters like these, which vehicles struggle to cross on a daily basis. Despite Jaflong being a tourist destination, the government cares little about the thousands of people visiting the place every day. The photos were taken Sunday.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

A lot of journalists took photos of the area and wrote about this road. But the government didn't take any initiative

When he visited the same place with friends 10 months ago, after the Eid-ul-Adha, he did not think that the family trip would be such a disappointment.

At Jaflong, 56km north of Sylhet city, Moinul thought out an alternative: visiting Bisnakandi, another spot in Gowainghat upazila, where water rolling down from Indian hills flows over rocks.

But locals' suggestion disheartened him once again. The road to Bisnakandi is worse still, they said.

Foyes Ahmed also came on a family trip, from Khulna, and had a realisation.

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14 parties to hold rallies of guardians, women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance will hold a "guardians' rally" on July 20 and a "women's rally" on July 21 in the capital to make them aware of watching their children's activities to keep them away from militancy and terrorism.

"We will tell them to keep watch over their children. We will tell them to monitor where their children go, what they do," said the alliance coordinator Mohammad Nasim, also health minister.

He gave the announcement at a rally titled "Bangladesh stands against militancy, terrorism, anarchy and communalism" at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

Anti-terrorism monitoring bodies to be formed

SAYS AL-LED 14-PARTY ALLIANCE

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Monitoring committees will be formed in every neighbourhood across the country with representatives from professional and social organisations to fight militancy and terrorism, Awami League leader Mohammad Nasim said yesterday.

The AL-led 14-party alliance would coordinate the activities of the committees, which will provide information to law enforcers every suspicious movement or anyone going missing, he told an anti-terrorism rally in the capital.

The 14-party leaders will visit different districts including Rangpur, Panchagarh, Sirajganj, Bogra and Comilla to raise awareness against militancy, he said.

The alliance held a similar rally in Chittagong city, making the same announcement.

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, the

alliance's coordinator in Chittagong, said committees would be formed in every ward, thana and vicinity with the alliance activists. "We would provide the list of the committee members to the police soon," he said.

"Many upstarts have intruded and are trying to foil the party's spirit," said Mohiuddin, also the president of Chittagong city unit AL, adding, "All have to be united to combat militancy."

AL lawmaker Wasika Ayesha Khan urged the guardians to be attentive so that children do not become easy targets.

President of Chittagong north district unit AL Nurul Alam Chowdhury criticised some television channels' role during the militant attack at a Gulshan café. Live broadcasting, he said, "sent a wrong message."

Addressing the rally in Dhaka, the 14-party leaders urged all pro-liberation and

TERRORIST ATTACKS NSU not sole element

VC ON INVOLVEMENT OF EX, CURRENT STUDENTS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

North South University (NSU) cannot be "the only element of the recent extremism", Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Atiqul Islam responded to journalists' queries at the institution's Banshundhara campus in the capital yesterday.

Newsmen had gone there to know of NSU's stance over the involvement of its former and current students in two recent deadly terror attacks, in a Gulshan café and near the Sholakia Eidgah in Kishoreganj.

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Rab's mobile app to receive terror info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the wake of recent militant attacks, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday launched a mobile application seeking information about terrorist and criminal activities across the country.

Rab officials said using the app, "Report 2 Rab", any person after hiding their identity would be able to send information such as photos and type and place of any crime, from anywhere in the country.

The Rab will receive it immediately and send personnel for prompt action, said Rab Director General Benazir Ahmed while inaugurating the app at Rab headquarters in the capital.

Initially android phone users will be able to use the app while it will be developed gradually for other smartphone users, he said.

Wing Commander Farhad Hossain Mahmud, director of communications of Rab, said eight types of crimes had been included along with other basic information such as place, district and upazila in the app.

There is an "others" option to input any other criminal activity, he said.

It will help people avoid going to Rab offices as many fear

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Korean embassy postpones concert

UNB, Dhaka

The South Korean Embassy in Dhaka has delayed its classical music concert for several months due to security concerns and public safety.

"Charm of Korea VIII 2016: Classical Music Concert" will be delayed for several months due to "heightened security concerns and public safety," according to the embassy sources.

The classical music concert was scheduled to take place in the capital on July 29-30.

Twenty-two people, including nine Italians, seven Japanese, one Indian national and two policemen, were killed inside and outside Gulshan's Holy Artisan Bakery during the July 1 terror attack.



An anti-terrorism rally organised by the ruling 14-party alliance on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BNP's Aslam to be quizzed at jail gate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cig

A Chittagong court yesterday gave police permission to quiz BNP Joint Secretary General Aslam Chowdhury at the Chittagong central jail gate in an explosives case.

The court passed the order after police sought a 10-day remand for the BNP leader, said court sources.

On November 2014, BNP activists threw petrol bombs targeting vehicles and exploded several cocktails in the port city leaving one injured. Later, an arson case was filed accusing some BNP men, including Aslam. On May 15, Aslam was picked up in Dhaka over an alleged plot with Israel to topple the government. He was also sued in a sedition case.

RANGPUR DEATHS FROM TOXIC LIQUOR Charges pressed against 24

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rangpur police pressed charges against 24 people, including three of a family, for the death of eight people who consumed toxic liquor in the city in September last year, said police.

Azizul Islam, sub-inspector of Rangpur sadar upazila police and the case's investigation officer, filed the charge sheet on Sunday.

The family members are liquor vendor Abdur Rahim, his wife Hosne Ara and son Mithu Mia, he said, adding that prime accused Abdur Rahim is in Rangpur jail while Mithu is yet to be arrested.

Police arrested 22 people immediately after the incident, including Hosne Ara - who are on bail, the IO informed.

According to the first information report, eight people were killed after taking toxic liquor at Bihari Bazaar in Tajhat area on September 28 last year. The elder brother of a victim filed a murder case the next day accusing 24 people.

Two police officials of Mahiganj police camp were also closed for negligence in performing duties, said police.

Four people died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, while the other four died in different times till October 1 last year, said police. Locals alleged that Abdur Rahim had been selling locally made liquor for long. A large amount of toxic liquor was recovered from his house after the incident, said police.

Road crashes kill 3

CITY DESK

Three people, including a Pakistani national and a four-year-old boy, were killed and six others injured in road accidents in four districts yesterday and on Sunday.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports, a four-year-old boy was killed in road accident in Taraganj upazila of Rangpur on Sunday evening.

The deceased was Modhu Mia, son of Monwar Hossain of Durakuthi village under Kishoreganj upazila in Nilphamari.

The incident occurred as a motorcycle hit him in front of Khaleque Cold Storage on Rangpur-Saidpur highway in the upazila on Sunday afternoon. He was rushed to Taraganj Upazila Health Complex where he succumbed to his injuries in the evening.

Meanwhile, two policemen were injured when their motorcycle was hit by a pickup van on Dinajpur-Bogra highway near Chinamor in Birampur upazila of Dinajpur yesterday.

The injured were Akmal Hossain, 35, a Sub Inspector and Rokon Mia, 40, a constable of Birampur Upazila Police Station in Dinajpur, said police.

Locals rushed them to Birampur Upazila Health Complex. Of them, Akmal has been referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as his condition was deteriorating.

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Cabinet approves agri research institution act

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet yesterday approved in principle the draft of "The Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (Bari) Act, 2016" aiming to increase the capacity of the institute alongside streamlining its research activities.

At a weekly meeting in Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, it also approved proposals to ratify agreements with Kuwait and Bahrain centring the promotion and reciprocal protection of investment.

Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiq Alam told journalists afterwards that Bari would formulate and approve detailed outlines to ensure stable research and conduct necessary research on various problems, including ones on tackling the adverse impacts of climate change.

He said it would take initiatives to inno-

vate new varieties of crops, including those adaptable to climate change, and apply ICT in the agriculture sector, providing necessary information and technology to farmers.

Bari will also arrange exhibitions on new varieties of crops, publish annual reports and booklets on new crops, and provide necessary training to researchers, officials and employees of Agriculture Extension Department as well as facilitate postgraduate research, he said.

Bari is run as per an ordinance promulgated during the military regime in 1976 and was amended twice, in 1984 and 1996, said Shafiq, adding that now it has 22 sections, including four new ones.

According to an apex court verdict, all laws and ordinances promulgated during military regimes stand repealed and illegal

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Resting his weary limbs, a rickshaw puller takes a nap in Dhaka University yesterday, all the while keeping a tight grip on the means of his livelihood to prevent it from being stolen.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS