

Kids take boat ride to attend classes

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

A good number of primary school students in Satla union under Ujirpur upazila of the district have to take risky boat ride to attend classes at least six months a year.

In most cases, the small kids, including girls, run the boats themselves.

"We remain anxious as our kids pass the waterway in country boats amid risk," said Bhagirath Mallik, a guardian of a student of Pashchim Kalbila Government Primary School in the union.

If a three-kilometre road from Nayakana to Madhya Kalbila is built, most of the students and teachers would be able to go to school easily, locals said.

Beels, canals and other water bodies cover large areas of Satla union inhabited by around 30 thousand people but no initiative has been taken to build roads to ease villagers' communication to and from the union parishad centre.

"Pashchim Kalbila Government Primary School was set up in 1973. There are three other primary schools in this area but most of the students have to go to school on small boats," said Ajit Kumar Roy, headmaster of the school.

Selina Khanam, a student of the school, said they feel worried while going to school for couple of months during the rains.

"We have to go to school on our small boats," Mihir Deuri, a Class II student.

"When winds blow, we face serious trouble," said Rayhan Hossain, another student.

Hafizur Rahman, chairman of Ujirpur Upazila Parishad, said, "No one informed me about the situation. I will try to take steps for building roads in the area from the next year."

Md Shahidul Islam, upazila education officer, said they informed the higher authorities of the matter, urging steps to ease communication of the schoolchildren.



Students of Pashchim Kalbila Government Primary School in Satla union under Ujirpur upazila of Barisal crossing a large water body on small country boats to attend classes as the surrounding areas remain under water for around six months a year.



PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN

Man gets death for killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A court here yesterday awarded death sentence to a man for killing his wife in 2012.

District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Amir Uddin pronounced the verdict against Md Fakrul Islam, son of Abul Hossain of Sadar upazila.

According to the prosecution, Fakrul was jailed for 11 years for killing his second wife in 2002.

After release from jail, he hacked his first wife dead over a family feud on March 3 in 2012.

SANITATION FOR FORMER ENCLAVE PEOPLE

Most of latrines damaged weeks after construction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

More than half of the newly built sanitary latrines meant for improving the former enclave's sanitation in Panchagarh's Boda upazila have been damaged before handing over to the authorities concerned in time.

Funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has recently set up 30 latrines at Puthimari village, one of the former Indian enclaves, in the upazila.

In June this year, LGED had floated a tender to set up 30 latrines using Iron

pillar, plastic pane, corrugated iron sheets and other materials.

Contractor Ashrafur Islam got the tender with lowest cost of Tk 14,000 for construction of each latrine which was supposed to be completed within June 30.

As the contractor used sub standard materials most of the latrines have either developed cracks or badly damaged before handing it over in time, alleged Mintu Mia, a resident of the village.

Besides, several villagers alleged that due to their ignorance, the contractor collected money and different materials

from several beneficiaries.

One of the beneficiaries, Yakub Ali, said the contractor took money from him for buying cement bags and iron rods.

Boda LGED Sub-Assistant Engineer Nazrul Islam, also the project supervisor, said we have already asked the contractor to reconstruct the latrines for failing to deliver quality works.

Contacted, Boda Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abu Awal said after investigation stern action would be taken against the contractor concerned if found responsible for the sub standard work.

FOUR KIDS MURDER IN HABIGANJ

Charge framing today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Habiganj court will frame charges today against the accused in the case for the murder of four school children in Bahubal upazila of Habiganj on February 12.

Habiganj Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal Judge Mafruz Parveen fixed the date on August 28, Abul Hasem Mullah Masum, special public prosecutor of the Tribunal, told this correspondent yesterday. Six of the accused were present in the court while three others are absconding, he added.

Masum said the Tribunal judge on July 25 passed an order for attachment of properties of the three fugitives -- Babul Mia, Ustar Mia and Billal Mia.

A police team led by Officer-In-Charge of Bahubal Police Station, Molla Monir

Hossain, conducted the operation to attach the properties of the absconding on August 4, he added.

Four schoolboys -- Monir Mia, 7, Zakaria Shuvo, 8, Tajel Mia, 10, and Ismail Mia, 10 -- were killed on February 12 over enmity between two groups in a local Panchayat (village arbitration council), according to the charge sheet submitted to the court.

On June 28, a Habiganj court accepted the charges against nine people, including the three absconding accused.

The six other accused are Abdul Ali, his two sons Rubel Mia, and Jewel Mia, Habibur Rahman Arju, Shahed Ahmed Bashir, and Bachchu Mia, of the same village.

Of them, Bachchu was killed in a "gunfight" with the Rapid Action Battalion in Chunarughat upazila of the district on February 25.

Detectives pressed charges against the nine people on April 5.



People with their heads shaven joined a hundred-kilometre-long human chain in Joypurhat yesterday, formed in defiance of some stray people's recent militant activities. The photo was taken from Kalai upazila in the district.

PHOTO: STAR

100-kilometre anti-militancy human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Around two lakh people in Joypurhat joined a 100-km-long human chain yesterday, protesting the recent militant attacks, including the one at Gulshan in the capital, and the killings of a few priests and foreigners.

The hour-long human chain was formed on the 32-km-long Tilakpur-Bhimpur road (north to south) and 70-km-long Punot to Mongolbari road (east to west) from 11:00am.

Local lawmaker Abu Sayeed Al Mahmud Swapan, SM Solaiman Ali, secretary of Joypurhat Awami League (AL), Mostafizur Rahman, mayor of Joypurhat municipality, and Mahfuza Mondal Rina, former lawmaker, spoke at a rally following the human chain.

They urged the militants to shun the destructive path.

SCHOOLBOY MURDER IN BOGRA

Youth gets death for killing, life for seeking ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A Bogra court yesterday pronounced a verdict of death sentence, life imprisonment and imprisonment for different terms against a young man for killing a schoolboy after abduction for ransom.

Public Prosecutor Khairul Bashar said the court pronounced the verdict of death sentence for murder, life imprisonment for demanding ransom, 10 years jail for abduction and three years jail for hiding information after abduction.

Md Hafizur Rahman, Judge of the Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court 1 of Bogra, handed down the verdict in a crowded court.

The convict is Al-Amin alias Sohag, now 21, son of Anwar Hossain of Bagbari under Gabtoli upazila. He was 19 when the crime was committed.

The victim was Shahriar Nafiz Siam, 8, son of CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver Belal Hossain of Puran Bogra Pashchim para of the town, and a student of Class II at Wapda Primary School in the area.

The case statement said Siam was abducted by Sohag on May 17, 2014, while he was playing in the yard of his house. Later, Sohag phoned Siam's father Belal and demanded Tk 3 lakh, otherwise he would kill Siam. Belal promised to pay Tk 10 thousand, but Sohag did not agree.

Belal informed the police, who told him to pay the money. Sohag agreed to take Tk 80 thousand for releasing Siam.

Belal took the money to two places suggested by Sohag, but Sohag called him and said he could not take the money as police were nearby.

In the afternoon, some playmates of Siam spotted his sandal in Sohag's house and told Siam's relatives, who informed the police.

Police arrested Sohag from his house in the evening. He confessed that he killed Siam and on his confession, the deceased's body was recovered from a hole beside his house.

The victim's father filed a case, accusing Sohag, with Sadar Police Station on the night of May 18, 2014.

After investigation, Sub-Inspector of the police station Anwar Hossain submitted the charge sheet to the court on September 23, 2014.

A symbol of struggle for survival

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

With an indomitable spirit and unwavering determination, Pushpa Rani has been continuing struggle to cope with her extreme poverty that she has inherited from her parents as well as visually challenged husband.

If you ever go to a floating market at Bhimruli village in Jhalakathi, you will see the 35-year-old woman rowing a boat loaded with guava with her visually impaired husband Sumontho Samadder.

Hundreds of tourists visit the place everyday to enjoy the scenic beauty of the market and its surrounding landscape, said locals.

A number of small boats loaded with guavas, hog plums and other agricultural products gather on the Bhimruli canal from dawn. Traders sell those to the wholesalers who turn up from across the country.

Pushpa leased a guava orchard from her neighbour for Tk 6,000 for a season to support her five-member family. Usually, the peak season for the fruit is from mid-July to first-week of August.

Pushpa said she herself takes care of her guava garden regularly while others do it by engaging labourers.

She collects guavas early in the morning from her garden. After returning home, she prepares breakfast for her husband Sumontho and three children and then goes to the floating market by a small boat to sell the fruits.

Sumontho lost his eyesight in a road accident over 12 years ago.

Sumontho said after losing his eyes, he married poor Pushpa Rani of Teota village in Banaripara upazila of Barisal as he was looking

for such a woman as wife who can take his as well as his family's responsibility.

When asked why she married a visually impaired man, Pushpa said she had no alternative but to marry Sumontho as she hailed from a poor family. But she is now happy with her husband and children, Pushpa said, adding that anyone can lose eyesight anytime.

She said two years ago her 10-year-old daughter Pinki left the school to take care of her two other siblings as she cannot manage time for them.

During the peak season, she earned a profit of Tk 8,000 to 10,000 from selling guava but it is too little to lead her livelihood, said Pushpa.

She said if she gets financial support from the government to lease two or three more guava orchards it would help continue her business and lead her family smoothly.

Pushpa Rani was talking to this correspondent while rowing her boat to a floating market at Bhimruli village.

Through strong will and hard work, Pushpa Rani becomes bread earner for her visually challenged husband, and three children.



Pushpa Rani, taking her visually impaired husband and a kid on boat, picks guava at her leased orchard at Bhimruli in Jhalakathi district. Inset, she rows a boat with the harvested guava to go to a nearby floating market for sale.

PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN