



Survey on Basia from today

Pollution, encroachment and human wastes make the river narrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The Basia river, which flows by the side of Bishwanath upazila town of Sylhet, has turned into a narrow stream of polluted water, thanks to mindless encroachment and human wastes dumped into it.

Water Development Board will begin a survey on the river today.

Monir Hosain, 85, of Deokolosh village under the upazila, said The Basia river was about 180 to 200 feet wide and 25 to 40 feet deep in 1956, but now it is only 80 to 100 feet wide.

Elderly people of the area said several canals once connecting the river with Deokolosh, Osmaninagar and Charchandi areas are now extinct.

During this correspondent's recent visit to the banks of Deokolosh, several farmers, mostly marginal and landless ones, said the river contains very little water in the dry season and they face problems in cultivating crops.

They urged re-excavation of the riverbed and construction of sluice gates to facilitate irrigation.

Pollution in the narrowed stream has taken a serious turn as chemical wastes from small industries on or near the banks are dumped into the river.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon's Sylhet chapter Abdul Karim Kim said protecting the rivers from encroachment and pollution is a must to save the life and livelihood of the people and preserve biodiversity.

Executive Engineer of Water Development Board of Sylhet Sirajul Islam said encroachment of the banks of the river has led to alarming decline in its navigability. They will start a survey from today, he added.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

The Basia river flowing by the side of Bishwanath upazila town in Sylhet has turned into a dirty narrow stream due to pollution, encroachment and mindless dumping of human wastes.

One shot dead by Indian Khasias

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Bangladeshi national was shot dead allegedly by Indian Khasias on Sonar Hat frontier in Goinghat upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased was Bachchu Mia, 35, of Pashchim Pantumai village in the upazila.

Bachchu was shot by Indian Khasias when he along with his fellows intruded into Indian territory through the border to bring stolen betel nuts, said Major Lutful Karim, deputy commander of BGB-5 Battalion.

SHANTAHAR-LALMONIRHAT ROUTE OF BOGRA Illegal carrying of goods in trains common

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Different kinds of goods are being illegally carried on the engines of trains by traders on the Shantahar-Lalmonirhat route in the district before the nose of the railway officials for a long time.

The illegal carrying of goods on the engines poses a threat to the commuters, and may cause derailment of the train.

Some local youths collect money for allowing traders to carry goods on the engines. The money is shared with the train drivers.

Pineapple trader Alim Uddin of

Bonarpara area in Gaibandha said carrying their goods on the engines by paying the youths is less costly than buying tickets and paying charges for the goods.

Banana trader Gias Ali of Mohimaganj said he has been carrying bananas on the engines at less cost for 13 years.

Asked about collecting money without receipt, a collector failed to give any satisfactory reply.

A driver said he asked traders not to keep goods on the train engine, but they do not pay any heed.

The mail train Padmarag is leased to SR Traders, a private company.

Manager of Padmarag train for SR Traders Selim Hossain said it was illegal to carry goods on the engines, and he will take help of Government Railway Police (GRP) to stop loading of goods on the engines.

Station Master of Gabtoli Sajedur Rahman said the government leased the train just for commercial purpose. Maintenance of the engine and salaries of the director, drivers, and other staffs are paid for by the government.

Station Master of Bogra Railway Station Benjurul Islam said action would be taken against the people illegally carrying goods on the engines.

Jhenidah AL leader abducted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An Awami League (AL) leader was abducted from Maliat village in Maliat union under Kaliganj upazila of the district on Tuesday.

Md Azizur Rahman, 48, secretary of Maliat union AL, also former chairman of the union, was abducted while he was taking a morning walk.

Vitim's nephew Khaminur Rahman Khan said his uncle went out for morning walk every day. On Tuesday, some men in a black microbus swooped on Azizur around half a kilometer from his house and took him away.

Law enforcers might have picked him up, family members alleged.

Brick kiln labourer Khaminur Rahman said four or five men were sitting in the microbus and two men were walking about. When Azizur reached there, they picked him up and took him away.

Azizur's family members went to Kaliganj Police Station to file a general diary (GD), but they could not.

Officer-in-Charge of Kaliganj Police Station Aminul Islam said police are trying to find out the abducted man.

Next hearing on charge framing Jan 10 as MP Rana 'ill'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A Tangail court yesterday set January 10 for hearing on charge framing against Awami League lawmaker Amanur Rahman Khan Rana and other accused in freedom fighter Faruk Ahmed murder case.

Judge Abul Mansur Miah of First Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court passed the order, said Anwarul Islam, court inspector.

Yesterday was set for holding the hearing but it was deferred as the main accused Amanur, AL MP from Tangail-3 (Ghatail), could not appear before the court because of his illness, he said.

On Tuesday, Amanur was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University from Kashimpur Central Jail as he has been suffering from heart disease, asthma and piles, court sources said.

Earlier on September 29, the hearing on charge framing against the lawmaker was deferred on the same ground.

Faruk Ahmed, also the then Tangail AL publicity secretary, was shot dead near his residence in Tangail town on January 18 in 2013.

Three days after the killing, Faruk's wife Nahar Ahmed filed a case with Tangail Model Police Station against unidentified criminals.

Police initially investigated the case, which was later shifted to Tangail DB police.



Traders carry goods on the engines of trains illegally on Shantahar-Lalmonirhat route in Bogra. The photo was taken on Saturday.

Bridge being built with low quality materials

Allege Lalmonirhat people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Locals alleged that the bridge over the Dharla river channel is being built with low quality materials for only Tk 5 lakh while the old one that was built at the same place at a cost of Tk 11 lakh collapsed in two years.

Authorities of Durgapur Union Parishad (UP) under Aditmari upazila of the district are constructing a 42-foot long and six-foot wide bridge over the Dharla river channel after Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation's (BADC) bridge collapsed in 2013.

The bridge will connect 200 families with the mainland at Degree Char village in the union.

UP sources said they got Tk 5 lakh from the Local Government Support Programme to build the bridge.

"BADC's bridge collapsed as low quality materials were used in its construction. Low quality materials are being used for constructing this bridge also," said Jobed Ali, 48, of the village.

Abdus Samad, 55, of the village said they built a bamboo bridge over the canal to connect with the main road, and they used it till February this year.

Contractor Babu Islam said no plan or design was prepared for this bridge, and he was building it from his experience. The construction of the bridge would be completed by December this year, he hoped.

Durgapur UP Chairman Salequzzaman Pramanik said the bridge would be used as foot over-bridge, and no vehicles would be allowed to cross it, adding that it was being constructed properly and there was no chance that it would collapse in 10 years.

Executive Engineer of Local Government Engineering Department Al Amin Khan said a minimum of Tk 20 lakh is needed to construct a 42-foot by 6-foot bridge with an engineering plan.

Villagers urged the authorities to build a durable bridge to save them from further suffering.

Sesame crop of choice for upland farming

The crop has been sowed on 320 acres this year, up from 250 acres last year

S DILIP ROY with ANDREW EAGLE

Sesame farming is proving to be a winner in Lalmonirhat. With reliable profits, the crop's suitability for higher terrain and bumper harvests possible with due care, sesame has earned popularity with farmers.

"I have grown sesame on 30 decimals of high land beside my home," says Nazrul Islam, 44, of Bhelabari village in Aditmari upazila. "I hope to realise a profit of Tk 10,000 when it's sold in January, which is a better return than can be expected from other crops grown on higher land." He has been farming sesame for the past five years.

"Sesame needs organic fertiliser but no pesticides," says another grower from the same village, Nur Islam, 52. "Weeds are the main problem, so the

crop needs care." Yet he hopes the sesame harvest from his 40 decimals will be even better this year than in years past.

Farmer Zahir Uddin, 50, from nearby Hazigonj village says they can produce up to 5 maunds of sesame from each bigha of land. "Each maund fetches as much as Tk 6,000 in the market," he says, "and there is never any trouble to sell it since the market is better organised than for other crops."

But for farmers like Harendra Nath Barmon, 62, from Chaklarhat village in Kaligonj upazila, commercial sesame farming is not a viable option. "The crop does best on higher land," he explains, "while in lower terrain its output is less impressive. Still we grow sesame for our family needs and sometimes there's some left over to sell." He

has dedicated 50 decimals of lowland fields to sesame this year.

"Sesame has high demand from consumers nationwide," says trader Kafil Uddin, 42, based at the market in Chaparhat Bazar in Kaligonj. "As such I pay farmers in advance to purchase their crop during the season."

According to Lalmonirhat's agriculture extension department office, sesame has been sowed on 320 acres district-wide this year, up from 250 acres last year. "The district's farmers are profiting from their efforts with boutique crops like sesame," says the office's deputy director Bidubhuson Roy. "Those who own higher elevation farmland are taking advice from us about growing sesame, nuts and other suitable crops."



A farmer takes care of sesame at his field at Bhelabari village of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR