



PHOTO: ABDUL WAHED

Illegal earth filling at Jotdarpara village under Ulipur municipality in Kurigram is obstructing the natural water flow of the Buri Teesta river.

Buri Teesta river dying

WDB stops flow of water as sluice gate collapses in 1988 flood

ABDUL WAHED, Kurigram

People in Ulipur upazila of the district are suffering as the Buri Teesta river is drying up due to earth filling at a place where a sluice gate collapsed in 1988.

The Buri Teesta originates from the Teesta river at Arjun village and joins the Brahmaputra river at Kachkol village under Chilmari upazila.

Flow of water in the 30-km-long river through Ulipur municipality area used to be controlled through two regulators (sluice gates) of Water Development Board (WDB) at Arjun and Kachkol villages.

WDB stopped flow of water by filling earth when the sluice gate at Arjun village collapsed during the flood in 1988. From then, the branch river started losing its depth and water-carrying capacity, and is almost dead now.

Freedom fighter Abu Bakar Siddik, 70, of Khearpur village, said, "Water would flow freely in the Buri Teesta about 20 years ago. Before liberation, the people of Roumari and Rajibpur upazilas would come to Ulipur Bazar for marketing and transporting all kinds of goods by boat. Boat races were

held every year, and there were plenty of fish in the river."

"Due to lack of flow, the river got filled up slowly with silt coming from upstream during the rainy season. Some people have constructed houses by raising the riverbed. Vast tracts of crops get damaged during flood or heavy downpour," Abu Bakar said.

"Dredging of the Buri Teesta and construction of the sluice gate are needed to save the ecology and produce crops by reviving the water flow," he added.

Abdul Aziz, 65, of Jotdarpara village, said, "I would cultivate jute and get it rotten in the river, but I cannot do it now. The riverbed was dredged for irrigation by the government about 37 years ago. It is still possible to revive the river if it is dredged again."

Parimol Majumdar, an activist of 'Save Buri Teesta-save Ulipur' movement, said, "We are agitating against grabbing of the Buri Teesta. We also want dredging of the river and reconstruction of the sluice gate."

"We have formed human chains and held bicycle rallies in Ulipur to demand restoration of flow of water in the Buri Teesta, and submitted a

memorandum to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)," Porimol said.

Executive Engineer of WDB in Kurigram Shafiqul Islam, said, "Digging of ditches and construction of embankments in different districts will be started this year. An eight kilometre area in Kurigram has already been taken under the project. Besides, a separate project for the Buri Teesta will be placed to the higher authorities. If the local lawmaker assists me, the project may be approved quickly."

UNO Shafiqul Islam said, "I have received a letter on the Buri Teesta from the villagers and have taken some steps. I have asked the assistant commissioner (land) to mark the area of Buri Teesta according to CS and SA land records. The meeting of Kurigram district river protection committee under the National River Protection Commission has taken a decision on the Buri Teesta and requested the local WDB authority to look into it as there are some lands of the WDB there."

"We will take steps against the land grabbers in the Buri Teesta after marking the river area," the UNO said.

Assault of Headmaster Jhalakathi UZ chairman sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Jhalakathi Sadar Upazila Parishad Chairman Sultan Hossen Khan and three of his close aides have been sued on charge of assaulting Latifur Rahman, headmaster of Gobindo Dabol Primary School in the upazila, on Monday night.

"Victim's wife Mala Begum submitted a written complaint to Sadar Police Station yesterday and we recorded it as a case the same afternoon," said Mohammad Mahe Alam, officer-in-charge of the police station.

According to the complaint, the chairman and his men beat up and tortured Latifur, trader Uttam Das, his sister Boni Rani Das and sister-in-law Anjona Rani Das last Monday over holding an election to the school managing committee.

Victim of politics!

Swapon attends HSC exam in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Swapon Kumar Roy, a Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinee from Patgram Technical and Business Management College, appeared at the examination inside the district jail yesterday.

Following the instructions from the controller of examinations of Technical Education Board, Dhaka, arrestee Swapon attended the examination inside the jail, said Kishore Kumar Nag, superintendent of district jail.

"Swapon was given his books for reading in jail on Friday and I sent letter to the education board controller the next day, seeking permission for Swapon's taking part in the examination," he said.

The District and Sessions Judge's Court granted his bail prayer yesterday, said advocate Shariful Islam Raju.

"We feel temporary relief as our son Swapon could take part in his examination and the court granted his bail prayer," said Swapon's father Subhas Chandra Roy.

"We are simple farmers. I believe Swapon became a victim of local politics as we have been facing a problem over casting vote in the union parishad polls last year," he said.

Police arrested Swapon, 19, from near their home at Bhandardah village in Patgram upazila, claiming his involvement in a cow stealing incident. But they produced him before a judicial magistrate's court on Friday, showing him arrested in a case filed on December 27 last year.

The Daily Star on Sunday published a report on the examinee's plight under the title 'Police action makes

2 Sarbahara men arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two outlawed Sarbahara Party men from Tangail Sadar upazila on Saturday night.

The law enforcers also recovered a 7.65 pistol and a magazine from their possession.

The arrestees are Mohammad Sobahan, 25, and Joyanal Mia, 28.

Bina Rani Das, commander of Crime Prevention Company-3 of Rab-12, said, acting on a tip off, they raided a house at Dainna Purbopara village and arrested Sobahan and Joyanal from there.

The arrestees are accused in two criminal cases, including one under Arms Act, filed with Tangail Model Police Station.

Disability no barrier

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Physically challenged HSC examinee Shah Alam has set a laudable example of overcoming odds through will power and perseverance.

He is writing the answer scripts with his wrists in the ongoing examinations at Hatibandha Women's College centre, as a business studies student of Hatibandha Alimuddin College.

Shah Alam, son of Ekramul Haque, a small farmer of Purbo Bisindai village of the district's Hatibandha upazila, lost palms of his two hands due to burn injuries when he was three years' old.

In the SSC examinations held in 2015, Shah Alam achieved GPA-4.17.

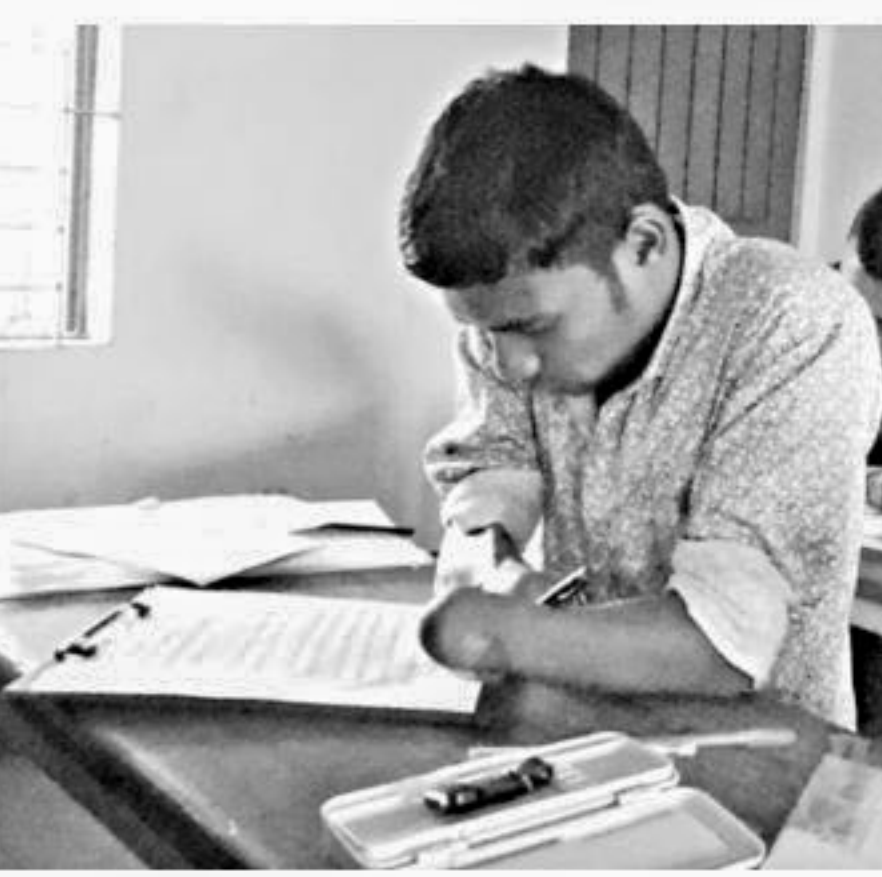
Shah Alam is the fourth of five siblings -- all reading in different schools and colleges in Hatibandha.

"Now I can write with ease using my wrists although I go a bit slowly to keep my writing neat and clean," said Shah Alam.

"I get help from classmates and teachers in the college. At home, I take help from my brother, father and even neighbours while wearing clothes," he added.

"Shah Alam is physically challenged but he is brighter than my four other children," said his father Ekramul Haque.

"I am struggling to provide financial



support for education of my children," he added.

Shah Alam's classmate Alimul Islam said, "Shah Alam is a good friend of us. He has no finger and palms but he can hold pen well for writing anything."

"Shah Alam is a bright student and hopefully he will do good results. The physically challenged boy belonging to a poor family will need financial help for pursuing higher education," said Golam Sarwar, principal of Hatibandha Alimuddin College.

Shah Alam dreams to receive higher education to get an administrative job from where he can contribute for welfare of the challenged people in the society.



Workers yesterday repair a railway bridge which collapsed due to heavy rain in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj on March 30.

PHOTO: STAR

Collapsed rail bridge yet to be repaired

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A railway bridge in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj has remained unrepaired after it collapsed four days ago.

Railway bridge No 55 collapsed due to heavy rainfall on March 30, causing immense sufferings to passengers, said Shaistaganj Stationmaster Saiful Islam.

Rail communication between Sylhet, Dhaka and Chittagong resumed yesterday afternoon after arranging an alternative route there, said Mujibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Srimangal Railway Police Station.

It will take some time to repair the bridge and trains will ply the alternative route until the bridge is repaired, said the OC.

A passenger, Sumona Bosak, was scheduled to sit for the recruitment test of a private office in Dhaka yesterday evening.

"I could not attend the test for suspension of the train service," said Sumona.

Romij Uddin Chowdhury of Sylhet said "I was supposed to go to Dhaka for business purpose by train on Saturday night but failed due to the situation."

Mujibur Rahman, assistant executive engineer of Bangladesh Railway (BR) in Sylhet division, said nearly 100 small and big rail bridges have become vulnerable on the Sylhet-Akhaura route.

According to the engineering department of the BR, none of the bridges have been repaired since their construction 60 to 70 years ago.

Lone teacher takes classes as headmaster busy

Children of Jhalakathi primary school have to wait long time for teacher in their classes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Students of Haliakathi Primary School in Rajapur upazila of the district are suffering a lot as one teacher has to take three classes simultaneously in three rooms due to shortage of teachers.

On a visit to the school this correspondent saw students of Class III waiting for the teacher after doing their class work.

"We are taught all the subjects by one madam, but she cannot take all the classes in different rooms at a time," they said.

"Every day we get the teacher for only a few minutes in the class, but we feel the need of full-time teacher for continuing our studies smoothly," said Sathi Aktar, a student of the same class.

"Classes are being hampered greatly as there are only three teachers, including the

headmaster, out of six posts," said teacher Ruana Aktar.

"The headmaster remains busy with official and administrative work, while the other teacher is away under a training course," Ruana said.

"It is very difficult for one teacher to manage the three classes per shift at the same time, and I become very tired," she added.

"The madam has to take all the classes as I remain busy with official work," said Headmaster Md Shahalam Khan, adding that he has informed the authorities concerned about the problem.

"Some new teachers will be posted to different schools, including this one, and they will join very soon," said Md Jahangir Alam, primary education officer (in charge) of Rajapur.

Missing girl rescued after 12 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Police rescued a girl on Saturday, 12 days after she went missing from Rajbari on March 19.

The victim is a student of Class X of Baghat High School.

One person was arrested in connection with the incident. He is Choian Saha, 24, son of Ratan Saha of Batanga village in Baliakandi upazila of Rajbari.

Office-in-Charge (OC) of Madhukhali Police Station Md Ruhul Amin said, "The girl was missing from March 19. We rescued the girl from Choian's house on Saturday," he said.

Choian was sent to Faridpur jail on Sunday, the OC said.

An abode for stolen cattle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Twenty one cattle were recovered from an underground cowshed at the house of a suspected thief in Nilphamari's Horinchara Koimaripara village in Domar upazila on Saturday.

Law enforcers arrested Dulal Roy, son of late Kesto Mohan, in this connection.

Police said Mominul Islam, 40, son of Ansar Ali of the village along with his fellow thieves used to steal cattle from farmers' houses at dead of night. He later kept the cattle at his underground cowshed and sold them to faithful brokers and butchers at lower prices.

A few days ago, the thieves stole a milking cow from the house of one Mosharaf Hossain of Koimari village in nearby Jaldhaka upazila.

The victim filed a case with Jaldhaka Police Station in this connection.

Saturday morning, he found his cow at the house of Dulal at Koimari Para after a frantic search and informed the police. Later, Dulal was arrested.

Following the arrestee's confessional statement during primary interrogation, police recovered 21 cattle from the underground cowshed where sufficient straw and grass were stored for consumption by the animals.

Mominul, however, managed to flee the scene, sensing the presence of the law enforcers, said Sub-Inspector Nazrul Islam.

Later, a case was filed with Domar Police Station in connection with the incident, said the SI.

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