

COX'S BAZAR TO TEKNAF Marine drive road opens soon

MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAT, Cox's Bazar

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to inaugurate the 80-kilometre marine drive road from Cox's Bazar to Teknaf as the third phase of the project is at the final stage, said sources of the local administration.

The work of the giant project aimed at developing fast communication in the famous tourist zone started in 1999.

The infrastructure at a cost of Tk 456 crore was implemented in three phases -- 24 km between Kalatoli to Inani was built in the first phase, and then 24 km from Shilkhali to Teknaf upazila headquarters and lastly 32 km road from Shilkhali to Sabrang in Teknaf, said Rana Priyo Barua, executive engineer of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in Cox's Bazar.

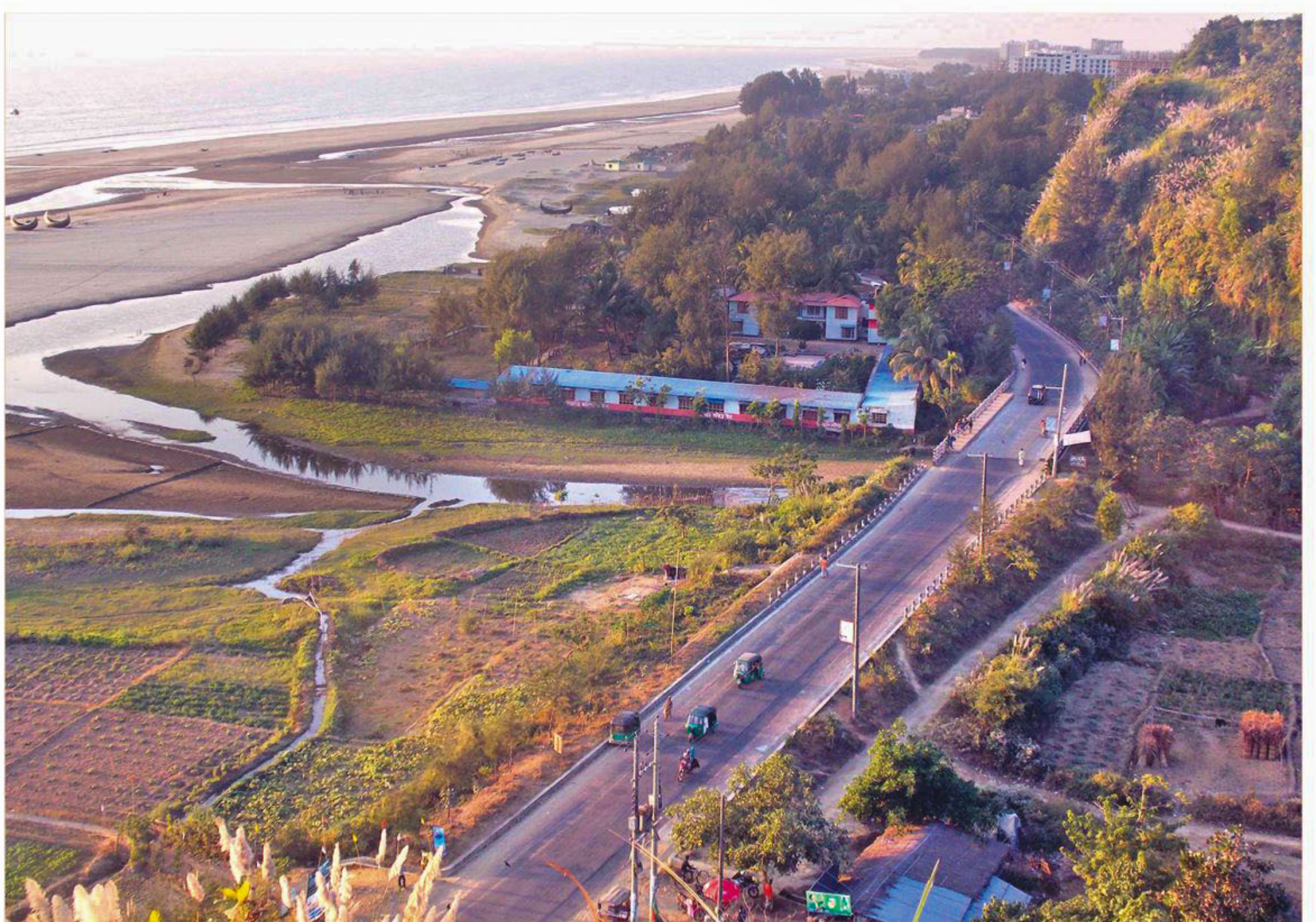
The marine drive has already contributed to an attractive tourist-friendly ambiance along with economic growth in Ukhia and Teknaf where hotels, cottages and resorts are being constructed.

"The marine drive adds to the modernity and recreational facilities in Cox's Bazar. It brings bright prospect of massive economic growth in the area," said Lt Col Forkan Ahmed (ret'd), chairman of Cox's Bazar Development Authority.

"This road is a milestone in Cox's Bazar. Every day, hundreds of tourists are travelling on the road amid eye catching natural beauty," said M Kibria Khan, president of Tour Operators Association in Cox's Bazar.

Abdur Rahman Bodi, lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-4 (Ukhia-Teknaf), emphasised branding of the marine drive road.

Bangladesh Army's 16 Engineer Construction Battalion is conducting the construction work of the marine drive under a project of the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges.



The 80-kilometre marine drive road from Cox's Bazar to Teknaf brings bright prospect for development of communication and tourism in the picturesque area. The photo was taken from Darianagar in Cox's Bazar.

PHOTO: MUHAMMAD ALI ZINNAT

Elongjani devouring Kalihati village for earth lifting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The Elongjani river has started to devour Char Bhukta village in Kalihati upazila following earth lifting by some influential people.

Erosion threatens the village as the influential quarters are excavating earth from the Elongjani, a tributary of the Jamuna river.

Many houses, a big portion of the century-old eidgah field and a graveyard have already gone into the river due to erosion, locals said.

On a recent visit to the village, this correspondent saw that earth cutting was going on in the river and the earth was being loaded on trucks.

Several villagers said sand was lifted from the river by dredgers during the dry season last year. Erosion started at the village during the rainy season last year when two houses went into the river and four

houses were partially washed away, they said.

Some sandbags were dumped by the Water Development Board (WDB) to check the erosion, but that did not work, said Shahida Begum, who lost 72 decimals, out of 95 decimals of her homestead.

"The people of 22 villages constructed the eidgah donating their lands at Char Bhukta village over one hundred years ago to say their Eid prayers there," said eidgah committee Joint Secretary Solu Mondol.

"One-third of the 200-decimal eidgah along with its boundary wall went into the river last year due to sand lifting," he added.

Solu said the villagers resisted setting dredgers this year, but the influential people brought an excavator and are lifting earth from the riverbed. They take over 100 truck-

loads of earth every day, he added.

As the mindless earth cutting is going on, villagers fear that more dwelling houses and the remaining portions of the eidgah and the graveyard will also go into the river in the coming rainy season, said Shahin Miah.

"The earth traders are outsiders having political clout. We have informed the local administration as well as people's representatives about the matter, but to no effect," he added.

Kalihati Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abu Nasar Uddin, however, said he was not informed of the illegal earth cutting from the river.

"The upazila administration did not give permission to anyone to lift earth from the river. Necessary steps will be taken after investigation," he added.



A section of local influential people continue earth extraction from the Elongjani river in Kalihati upazila of Tangail, causing erosion at Char Bhukta village.

PHOTO: STAR

JUBO LEAGUE LEADER MURDER 12 sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A Bogra court on Monday sent 12 people to jail after rejecting their bail prayer in the case for killing a Juba League leader.

The court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Kamruzzaman gave the order when they surrendered before the court seeking bail.

The accused are Bihar Union Parishad Chairman Mohidul Islam, Shah Jalal alias Shaj, Karim alias Farid, Apple, Sohel, Abdul Hannan, Alamgir, Rana, Shohag, Helal, Belal and Liton.

According to the case statement, The accused stabbed Omar Faruque, Bihar union Juba League's general secretary, during a clash at Sangshardighi village under Shibganj upazila in the district on March 5 this year.

Later, the victim's brother Ferdous Hossain Nayan lodged a case against 35 people of the same area and police arrested three in the case so far.

Shibganj Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Zahid Hossain said the clash began over establishing supremacy in the area.

Tea workers on strike

They confine manager demanding repair of their houses damaged by recent storms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Tea workers in Kulaura upazila of the district went on an indefinite strike yesterday, demanding immediate repairing of their houses that were damaged by recent storms and incessant rain.

They also demanded jobs in the tea gardens for their children, increase in the payment for harvesting tea leaves from Tk 2 per kg to Tk 5 per kg, hike in their daily allowance and provision of gratuity fund.

Workers of Chatlapur Tea Garden confined the manager inside his office yesterday, said Makhan Bauri, president of Chatlapur Tea Garden unit of Bangladesh Tea Labour Union.

"Our houses have been totally damaged but we do not have enough money to repair those," Makhan said. "We demand that the

authorities repair our houses immediately," he added.

Nepal Roy, 30, a worker of Chatlapur Tea Garden, said, "I have been working in this garden for the last thirteen years. I earn Tk 85 per day but the amount is too small to maintain my family. Our house collapsed due to rain and storm, but the authorities have not taken any initiative to repair it."

Manager of Chatlapur Tea Estate Iftekhar Enam told this correspondent that the demands of the workers were illogical. There are around three thousand kilogrammes of tea leaves in the factory, but the workers have locked it, he said. He asked, "Who will bear the responsibility if the leaves get spoiled?"

They workers were demonstrating in front of the manager's office till 3:30pm when this report was filed.

Meagre relief for flood-hit people in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Flood-hit people in Netrakona's Khaliyura and Mohanganj upazilas are not getting sufficient relief.

The situation will worsen further in Khaliyura when the stock of comparatively affluent farmers will run out within a month, said Nazim Uddin Sarker, chairman of Krishnapur Union Parishad (UP).

The relief has also been a far cry for flood victims of remote areas 10 to 15 kilometers away from the upazila headquarters as they cannot reach the distribution points for relief, said Chakua UP Chairman Abul Kalam Azad.

They urged the local administration to open OMS centres at ward level to bring the flood victims under relief network.

"I need around 50 tonnes of rice for 5200 flood-affected families in the union but I got 11:50 tonnes in the last 15 days," said the chairman.

Ninety tonnes of rice and Tk 6,30,000 have been distributed among the flood-hit people so far, said Mohammed Tofael

Ahmed, Khaliyura upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).

Three OMS centres have been opened at the upazila headquarters since Sunday and every centre has an allotment of one tonne of rice and one tonne of wheat per day, he said.

Higher authorities have been urged to take immediate steps for VGF (vulnerable group feeding) and rice meant for poor people at Tk 10 per kg but the programme is yet to be started, said the UNO.

Mohanganj UNO Nizam Uddin Ahmed said a government relief of 66 tonnes of rice and Tk 10, 00,000 have been distributed among the flood victims so far.

Ashraf Uddin Ahmed, district fisheries officer, said some 16,000 fishermen families are now in deep crisis due to the flashflood and they need immediate relief support.

Agriculture also faced a serious loss in the early flood that submerged 48,670 out of 1,84,320 hectares of land with nearly ripe boro paddy in eight upazilas, said an agriculture officer.

LETTER TO UNO Schoolgirl seeks dissolution of marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A newlywed bride, also a Class X student, submitted a complaint to Banaripara Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) on Monday to dissolve her marriage that her mother 'forcibly' arrange.

The petitioner, Nurunnahar Mili mentioned that her mother Nasrin Akther took her to Noakhali and forcibly married her with one Zahirul Islam of Uzirpur upazila on April 14.

During a discussion over the issue, Mili's mother said she had to arrange the marriage as she was losing control over her daughter.

UNO Ishrat Jahan said Mili was given time till April 27 to rethink about breaking up the marriage.

PATUAKHALI MEDICAL COLLEGE Protest against move to shift campus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

People from all walks of life staged a demonstration in the town yesterday protesting an attempt to shift Patuakhali Medical College campus to a place outside the town.

Patuakhali Medical College Sthanantor Sharojantro Protirodh Committee brought out a procession that started from Patuakhali Medical College premises and ended in front of the deputy commissioner's office after parading the main streets in the town.

They also held a meeting in front of the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office at which the committee Convener Prof Abdus Salam and Sadar Upazila Parishad Chairman advocate Tariquzzaman Moni spoke among others.

They also submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the DC.

The locals organized the rally after district unit Awami League leader advocate Sultan Ahmed Mridha recently submitted a prayer to the ministry concerned to shift the medical college to Bahalgachi village, about 5km away from the present.

Mridha said he submitted a prayer to shift the medical college campus due to shortage of land on the present campus.

He said more land would be needed for doctors' quarters, students' halls, mosque, playground, auditorium and laboratories, but the present campus does not have sufficient space for those.



Workers of Chatlapur Tea Garden in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar bring out a procession demanding immediate repair of their houses that were damaged by recent storms and incessant rain.

PHOTO: STAR

Rejoinder & our reply

In a statement, Md Humayun Kabir, upazila agriculture officer (UAO) of Dimla under Nilphamari district protested a report titled "Blast attack worries Nilphamari boro farmers" published in The Daily Star on April 11, 2017.

He claimed the report is 'not true' and 'baseless'.

The statement says, in the beginning of the month, the weather became too adverse with hot day, cold night, deep fog, dewy morning, cloudy sky and drizzling, which are favourable for spreading blast disease in paddy.

As hybrid varieties BRRI 28 and BRRI-29 are too sensitive to the fungus, deputy assistant agriculture officials in different block offices in the upazila, from the beginning, advised farmers to use different types of fungicide in certain doses. For those initiatives, the fungal attack remained under control.

Farmer Md Zakir Islam Shiblu, whose name was mentioned in the report, used less than the suggested doses of fungicide in his field.

Later as per the advice of the officials, he sprayed prescribed dose of the fungicide, took other measures and was able to control the fungal attack.

On the other hand, it is not true that fungicide did not work in Alamgir Hossain's field.

The disease in Alamgir's field remained under control due to using the prescribed dose of fungicide, said the statement.

OUR REPLY

The rejoinder signed by Dimla UAO on April 13, 2017 mentioned that blast disease affected paddy fields in the area due to some adverse atmospheric factors.

He had also told the same to this correspondent before filing of the report and the information was included in the news item as his quotation.

Regarding farmers' complaint that the antidotes were not working well to combat the disease, The Daily Star correspondent talked to the deputy director (DD) of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Nilphamari district at time of preparing the news item.

The DD, GM Idris told this correspondent over cell phone that the use of improper doses of fungicide (medicine) by farmers was responsible for not getting the desired result.

DD's version along with his name was also published in the same news.

The UAO in his rejoinder claimed that the disease is under control and this correspondent in his news mentioned the same opinion quoting the DD as he had also claimed the same.

The story was prepared after talking to a number of farmers as well as local elites and the names of many of them could not be mentioned due to space constraint.

This correspondent has no contradiction with the UAO regarding the case of farmer Zakirul Islam Shiblu as the information provided in the report, regarding use of proper doses of fungicides to control the disease, is almost similar to that of the UAO's protest letter.

The extent of the disease was ascertained as per farmers' general opinion and random observation of the correspondent.

The aim of the report was to draw attention of the higher authorities to address the problem as soon as possible for greater interest of the farmers and the country as well.

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Today is the first death anniversary of Mrs. NOOR-E-GULSHAN DOLLY KHAN, Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.
Son: Lutfe Rabbi Khan
Grand-daughter: Anika Khan
Daughter-in-law: Mehjabeen Khan