

Ensure women's safety on public transport

Speakers tell Tangail meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Speakers at a meeting in the town yesterday urged the authorities concerned to ensure safety of women and girls on roads and public transport.

Eighty-five percent women and girls face sexual harassments in different ways while travelling in public transport and male passengers are responsible for 75 percent of the incidents, they said.

They came up with the demand at the inaugural function of a pilot project of Brac on 'Safe Road for Women and Girls'.

The non-governmental organisation arranged the function at Shibnath High School in the town under their 'road safety and gender justice and diversity programmes' with the slogan "Let us make our roads and transports free from accidents and sexual harassment".

Additional Deputy Commissioner Nesar Uddin Jewel inaugurated the programme as the chief guest while

Additional Superintendent of Police Aslam Khan attended as special guest.

President of the school managing committee Sirajul Haque Khan Alamgir presided over the function while Brac representative Munir Khan moderated the programme.

The speakers asked women and girls to raise their voice against sexual harassment on roads and public transport.

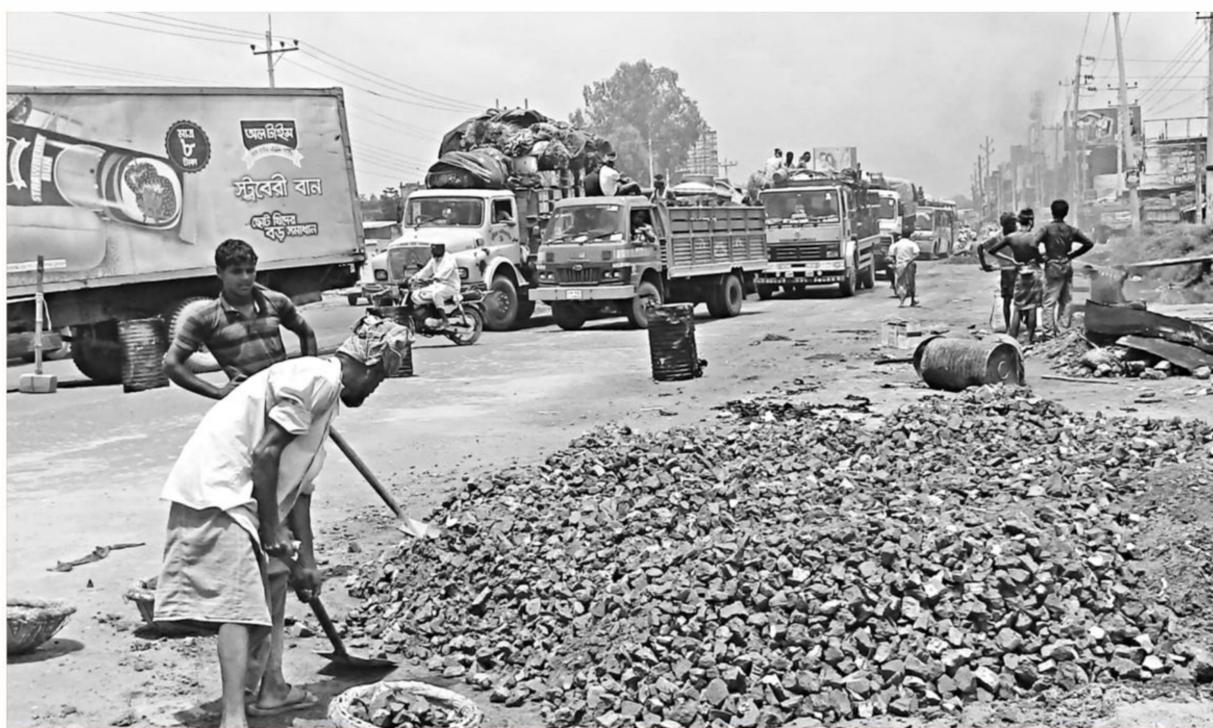
They urged authorities to develop road management for ensuring safety of the women and girls on roads.

They emphasised inclusion of a chapter in the textbooks for creating awareness among the students over the issues.

Organisers of the function said about 21,000 people are killed in road accidents across the country every year. Mentionable that the number of woman and girl victims is quite high.

Brac, under the pilot project, will train 37,000 students and 100 teachers of 100 schools, and also 700 drivers and 700 helpers in Tangail for creating awareness about the issues, they added.

After the function, a procession was brought out.



Dhaka-Tangail highway from Elenga to Rasulpur in Tangail often sees serious traffic congestion as the two-kilometre stretch of the road remains in an awful condition for months.

PHOTO: STAR

Man arrested for killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police on Tuesday night arrested a man at Sazan village in Lakhai upazila of Habiganj on charge of killing his wife the same night.

The detainee was identified as Nirmol Roy, 30, of the village.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Lakhai Police Station M Bazlur Rahman, said Nirmol strangled his wife Sitra Rani Roy, 28, following a family dispute on the night.

On information, police recovered Sitra's body and sent it to Adhunik Sadar Hospital in Habiganj for autopsy.

Nirmol confessed his crime to the police during primary interrogation, the OC added.

ILLEGAL POWER CONNECTIONS CBA leader jailed

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A mobile court yesterday sentenced a CBA leader of West Zone Power Distribution Company Ltd (WZPDC) to one and a half years' imprisonment for providing illegal power connections to a number of houses in Bagerhat town.

The convict, Jasim Howlader, 35, of Gobardia area in the town, is a Class three employee of WZPDC and general secretary of Bagerhat WZPDC CBA.

The court of Executive Magistrate Nazim Uddin also fined him Tk 50,000. In default, he is to suffer three months more in jail.

Executive Magistrate Nazim Uddin said he and Bagerhat WZPDC Executive Engineer Palash Paul launched a drive near the Tennis Club and Launch terminal areas and unearthed huge pilferage of power in at least five residences and business establishments and disconnected the illegal connections.

After quizzing the illegal consumers, the court came to know that WZPDC CBA leader Jasim provided the illegal connections in exchange for Tk 40 thousand to Tk 50 thousand from each, he added.

On the basis of their complaints, Jasim was detained from WZPDC office premises and later produced before the court that sent him to jail.

DHAKA-TANGAIL HIGHWAY REPAIR WORK LINGERS Gridlocks make commuters suffer at Rasulpur-Elenga stretch

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Passengers have to undergo untold sufferings as hundreds of vehicles face regular gridlocks amid the repair work of the two-kilometre stretch from Rasulpur-Elenga of Dhaka-Tangail highway.

The authorities concerned failed to fix it properly ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha although the road has been in a bad shape for the last few months due to work for a four-lane highway, alleged transport workers, and traffic and highway police.

Frequent heavy rain during the last two months worsened the situation, they said.

Visiting the area on Wednesday,

this correspondent saw the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) men doing repair work at three spots on the stretch and traffic and highway policemen struggling to ease the congestion of hundreds of vehicles, including passenger buses and goods-laden trucks, in the area.

The RHD men supervising the repair work said heavy rain is not only hampering the work but causing damage to the road.

"The area sees gridlocks almost daily for the last few months as the expansion work of Joydevpur-Chandra-Tangail-Elenga road is going on. Besides, the recent heavy rain badly damaged its two-kilometre stretch from Rasulpur to

Elenga," said Sajedul Islam, a traffic inspector in Tangail.

"The RHD has set up a contraflow for repair of the road and our vehicles get stuck on the stretch almost every day. We faced serious tailbacks in the area before and after the Eid-ul-Fitr," said Khokon Miah, driver of a Dhaka-bound passenger bus.

"I have seen the repair work at the stretch for the last few months but the road still remains in a bad condition," said Shahidul Islam, a bus passenger from Pabna, who moves on the road regularly for business purposes.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader during his visit to the highway on August 9

had directed local RHD officials to make the road usable by the next ten days.

Contacted by this correspondent on Wednesday, Noor-e-Alam, executive engineer of RHD in Tangail, claimed that they have already completed repair work by the deadline.

"Now work is going on at the Rasulpur-Elenga stretch of the highway to make the road smooth, so that it remains in a good condition till at least 15 days after the Eid-ul-Azha," he said.

"If it does not rain, we hope there will be no problem for vehicles to pass the road during the heavy rush days before and after the Eid," he added.

Mashalia boats brighten carpenters' lives



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Carpenters are busy making boats locally called 'Mashalia nouka' in Baliakandi upazila of Rajbari as the demand for the water transport has increased in the adjacent districts due to prolonged flood.

The boat makers of Mashalia village in Baliakandi upazila are busier than usual this monsoon.

Omol Roy said they are making wooden and steel sheet boats with flat bottoms, suitable for shallow water. This kind of boat is usually used for carrying crops from the field or to the market, transporting jute and jute stalks, catching fish and travelling short distances, he said.

"Seasoning of timber is important in making the water transport and tar and tannin of mangosteen are used for coating the boat to make it water resistant," he added.

Ranjit Kumar Baroy, 35, said they mainly use babla, uri mango, puo and mahogany trees for making boats for use in shallow water during the monsoon. Sometimes they also use steel-sheets with timber to make boats, he said adding that he has been in the profession for 10 years.

"The price of a boat ranges from Tk 6,000 to Tk 18,000, depending on its

size. The cost of making a boat is around Tk 5,000 to Tk 15,000. The boats are 12 feet to 27 feet long and three feet to six feet wide," said Md Khorshed Alam Sheikh.

"We work from early in the morning till late night to make a boat after receiving order from the customers. The customers usually come from Magura, Faridpur, Jessore and Khulna," said Kumarash Mondol, 30. "Two carpenters need at least three days to make a boat. Boat making is our seasonal job which we do during the rainy season only. Our permanent job is building houses," he added.

"The demand for boats is better this year compared to the previous years because water level is rising day by day everywhere," he added.

Arobindro Roy, 32, of Mashalia village, said they use a wooden boat in catching fish, collecting crops and to go to nearby markets."

Anukul Chandra Biswas said they feel proud of this boat because it is known to all as 'Mashalia nouka'. The name of our village has spread everywhere due to this boat, he added.

Elderly person Paban Chandra Roy said, "People of different districts come to our village only for this boat, so I think we are lucky being experts at this kind of art."

Man to walk gallows for killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A court here yesterday convicted a man to death for murdering his wife in Pirganj upazila of the district in 2011.

The convict, Enamul Haque, 50, is son of late Tojir Uddin of Nafanagar village in Dinajpur's Bochaganj upazila.

Thakurgaon Additional District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Haidar Ali also fined him Tk 10,000.

After investigation, police submitted the charge-sheet against Enamul on October 7 the same year in this regard.

Enamul married Salma Begum, 38, daughter of Hamid Bakhs of Josaipara village in Pirganj, about 24 years ago and started living with his in-laws family since then.

Two held with VGD rice in Naogaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police detained two people and seized a tractor trolley loaded with 128 sacks of government rice, allocated for Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme, in Atrai upazila of Naogaon on Wednesday.

The arrestees are Pintu Mia, 35, son of Mohammad Ferdous, also driver of the seized vehicle, and its helper Biplob Hossain, 18, son of Mohammad Monakka of Sadupur village in the upazila.

Officer-in-Charge of Atrai Police Station Badruddoza said, acting on a tip-off, a police team led by Sub-Inspector Firoz Mia raided Kashiabari Bazaar and seized 128 sacks of VGD rice (each sacks containing 30 kg) and detained the two.



Workers employed by local traders set sandbags along Kuakata sea beach in Patuakhali to protect the scenic tourist spot from erosion by waves from the Bay.

PHOTO: STAR

Bid to protect Kuakata beach

Businessmen dump sandbags to save the beach from erosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Nine businessmen of Kuakata dumped 250 sand-filled bags along the beach in the last two weeks to protect it from erosion by tidal surge during the rainy season, and they have a plan to dump 500 more bags.

Md Shah Jalal, owner of Hotel Sunrise, said erosion washes away a portion of the beach into the Bay every year, and all establishments situated outside the flood control embankment face the threat of being devoured by the Bay.

"We urged the local authorities, including Water Development Board (WDB), to take sustainable steps to protect the beach, but in vain. Finally, nine of us, all businessmen, took a plan to protect the beach by dumping sand-filled bags along the shore. We have already placed 250 bags on the beach and plan to place 500 more," he said.

The step has worked as tidal surge cannot hit the shore directly now, Shah

Jalal said, adding that the total cost would be around Tk 10 lakh.

Md Kabir Hossain, a small trader of the same area, said this initiative will protect the beach from erosion that takes serious turn in the rainy season,

The local businessmen said they requested the authorities concerned, including Water Development Board (WDB), to take sustainable steps to protect the beach, but in vain.

especially from May to October.

The only road link from Kuakata zero point to the beach is also damaged by tidal surge every year, locals said.

Bareq Mollah said he requested the water resources ministry and the WDB to build a marine drive here like that in Cox's Bazar to protect Kuakata beach, but they did not respond.

He spent over Tk one lakh to protect the lone road from erosion by dumping bags filled with sand at the end of the road around a month ago, he said, adding that erosion has decreased as tidal surge cannot hit the road.

"We request the prime minister to take steps on an emergency basis to protect Kuakata beach from erosion," he said.

Executive Engineer of WDB Kalapara Circle Abul Khayer said they sent a proposal in 2004 to the higher authorities to protect the beach from erosion, but in vain, adding that around 100 metres of the beach have been washed away since then.

"Now we are preparing a proposal of a newly designed embankment to protect the beach," he added.

Kuakata Municipality Mayor Abdul