

# Water hyacinth chokes Pirojpur waterways

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Canals, rivers and marshlands in different areas of Nazirpur upazila of the district have become choked with water hyacinth, hampering water communication severely.

Locals said most areas of the upazila, including Deulbari-Dobra, Kalardoania and Malikhail, are marshlands and small boats and motorised boats are the main means of communication there, adding that it becomes difficult for them to move easily from November to January every year as water hyacinth blocks most of the canals.

Trader Md Mizanur Rahman of Boithakata bazar said their business depends on water communication, but they have to suffer a lot to transport their products as the canals remain blocked with water hyacinth for around four months every year.

Farmers said water hyacinth grows profusely in the marshlands and they make floating sapling beds with it during the rainy

season. At that time they cannot grow any paddy in their lands as they remain waterlogged. With the approach of winter the water decreases and they push away the water hyacinth through different canals to clear the lands for cultivation.

"During ebb tide, the water hyacinth flows down to the river and it becomes impossible to move any vessel through it," Abdul Mannan, a local resident, said, adding that excessive water hyacinth hampers the business of the floating market in the Belua river at Boithakata.

School and college goers have to suffer a lot as they cannot reach their institutions in time.

"Though it normally takes ten minutes to cross the Belua river by boat, it takes more than five times longer during this season," said boatman Alamgir Hossain of Boithakata bazar.

Locals said if farmers use the water hyacinth on their land as fertilizer, it will not hamper water communication.



Water communication is severely hampered in the rivers and canals in Nazirpur upazila of Pirojpur as water hyacinth completely covers the rivers and canals. The picture was taken a few days ago from the Belua river beside Boithakata bazar in the upazila. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Missing kid found dead in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Body of a one-and-a-half-year-old child was found floating in a pond in the district town yesterday, two days after she went missing.

The deceased was Jhumur, daughter of Jahidul Islam Sheikh of Bagerhat's Kachua upazila. Jahidul lives at Moddhorasta in the town with his two wives and runs a fuchka stall.

Police said Jhumur was asleep with her mother Mukta on Friday night.

Returning home around 10:00pm, Jahidul found that his child was missing and searched for her.

Locals found Jhumur's body floating in a pond near her house yesterday and informed the police.

Police arrested Jhumur's stepmother Moni Begum for interrogation.

## Stand against graft

Speakers tell Tangail rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Speakers at a rally in Tangail's Madhupur upazila yesterday vowed to take a united stance against corruption, saying corruption is something that stands against the spirit of the Liberation War.

Youth Engagement and Support (YES) Friends Group, a sister organisation of Sachetan Nagorik Committee (Sanak) of Madhupur upazila unit, and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), jointly organised the rally with the slogan 'Durnity Bijoyer Chetonar Poriponhi.'

Forty-five youths joined a bicycle procession that started from in front of Madhupur Degree College around 11:30am and travelled around 15 kilometres before ending at Sanak office in Madhupur.

During the rally, they also distributed leaflets among the locals with an invitation to attend a two-day information fair scheduled for December 5 and 6, which is to be organised jointly by Madhupur upazila administration, Sanak and TIB.

Among others, Area Manger of TIB Mohammad Habibur Rahman Chowdhury and Vice-president of Sanak's Madhupur unit Shahidul Islam addressed the rally.

Speakers said ahead of the International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9 they brought out the procession demanding good governance, accountability, equal rights, communal harmony and a violence and corruption free Bangladesh.

Terming corruption a global issue, they urged the government to form an active and effective work strategy in order to control or prevent it.

## Newlywed's skeleton found after 42 days of her missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Skeleton of a newlywed woman was found on Saturday, 42 days after she went missing in Niamatpur upazila of Naogaon.

The victim was Alema Khatun, 20, daughter of Abul Hossain.

Alema married Shahriar Shawan, 20, son of Rashed Menon Rumi, two-and-a-half months ago.

She went missing from her in-laws' house on October 21.

Police sent the skeleton to Naogaon General Hospital for autopsy.

Police arrested Shahriar, his father Rashed, mother Sultana Razia and uncle Nahid Reza on Saturday night, police said.

A Naogaon court yesterday sent the accused to jail, police added.

## Fully implement CHT accord

Speakers tell rallies marking 20th anniversary of peace agreement

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) organised rallies in Rangamati and Bandarban district towns on Saturday demanding full implementation of CHT peace accord signed 20 years ago.

At a programme organized by PCJSS at Rangamati Gymnasium premises in the town, local lawmaker Uchaton Talukdar said the people of CHT are living in insecurity as the peace deal has not been fully implemented, reports our correspondent.

"The government claims that 48 of 72 clauses of the CHT peace accord have been implemented but in reality, the government has implemented only 26 clauses," Uchaton said.

Ashok Saha, Chittagong unit secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Hossain Kabir, professor of department of public

administration at Chittagong University, Prakriti Ranjan Chakma, president of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum's CHT region, Mangal Kumar Chakma, information and publicity secretary of PCJSS, and Arun Tripura, secretary of Pahari Chhatra Parishad's (PCP) Rangamati district unit, were present at the function presided over by Suborno Chakma, president of PCJSS.

Rangamati Hill District Council (RHDC) also organised a rally on the RHDC premises in Rangamati municipality premises, marking of the 20th anniversary of CHT peace accord.

Dipankar Talukdar, president of ruling Awami League's Rangamati unit, was chief guest at the programme and lawmaker Firoza Begum Chinu attended, among others.

RHDC Chairman Brisho Ketu Chakma presided over the programme.

Our Bandarban Correspondent reports: Thousands of people gathered at a rally organised by PCJSS on the premises of Puraton Rajar Math in the district town on Saturday noon.

Speakers said at the programme alleged that the government has failed to honour the peace agreement signed 20 years ago to restore indigenous people's lands in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission is not being able to play an effective role as the rules and regulations of the Commission are yet to be enacted, they said.

PCJSS leader KS Mong Marma attended as chief guest at the programme while its Secretary of Land Affairs Ching Hla Mong Chak, Bandarban unit Secretary Kyawba Mong Marma, Parbatya Chattagram Jubo Samiti Bandarban unit President Mostu Marma spoke, among others.



Local Jubo League activists burn tyres yesterday blocking the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Sarail upazila, demanding cancellation of new committee. PHOTO: STAR

## People the sufferer

Jubo League men go berserk blocking highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Local activists of Jubo League staged a demonstration yesterday blocking the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Sarail upazila, demanding cancellation of the new committee.

The one-hour blockade created huge traffic congestion on the highway.

The activists, led by Shahbazpur union Jubo League General Secretary Rajib Ahmed, blocked the highway by burning tyres in front of the first gate of Shahbazpur bus stand. They demanded formation of a new committee.

The protesters shouted slogans against district unit Jubo League acting President Shahanur Islam and General Secretary Sirajul Islam Ferdous.

Rajib alleged that Sarail upazila Jubo League leaders suddenly announced a new committee without informing any leader of Shahbazpur union and included supporters of Jatiya Party and Chhatra Dal in exchange for money.

Officer-in-Charge of Sarail Police Station Md Mofiz Uddin Bhuiyan said a large number of vehicles got stranded on both sides of the important highway due to the one-hour road blockade.

## Priest not abducted

Claims Natore police while family says he was kidnapped for ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Police has claimed that Christian priest Father Walter William Rozario, who went missing from Natore on Monday and got rescued from Sylhet on Friday, had gone into hiding due to frustration.

On the other hand, family members of Father Walter, assistant parish priest of Bornimariabad Catholic Church in Baraigram of Natore, said he managed to flee from the kidnappers.

Police yesterday produced Walter William Rozario before a Natore court and placed their statement in this regard.

The court ordered handing the priest over to his family members.

Earlier on Saturday, Natore Superintendent of Police Biplob Bijoy Talukder in a press briefing at his office said, "Using technology and interrogating Father Walter William Rozario, police has confirmed that it was not a case of abduction."

"Police has collected CCTV footage from Jamuna Bridge Toll Plaza, which shows that he was giving toll to the bridge authority, boarding on his own motorbike," the SP said.

"Walter spent the first night at a hotel in Tangail, the second in Habiganj and the third at a Sylhet hotel. He was fully OK when police rescued him from a bus counter at Sylhet on Friday."

"Police also recovered the motorbike, on which he went into hiding, from Nabinagar upazila of Habiganj on Friday afternoon," the SP said.

Asked about some callers' seeking ransom from his family members, the police official said criminals made the call by cloning the mobile number of Walter.

Contacted, Bimal Rozario, brother of Walter William Rozario said, "We do not agree with the version of police. Walter was kidnapped."

Earlier, Amal Rozario, another brother of Walter, said, "My brother Walter called me on Friday afternoon and told me that he managed to flee from the kidnappers. He was weeping that time."

## Work for water plant opens at Bhandaria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Indian Higher Commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla yesterday inaugurated the work to set up a water treatment plant at Bhandaria municipality.

Eleven water treatment plants will be set up in the municipality by the Indian government at a cost of Tk 11.50 crore.

Environment Minister Anwar Hossain Manju was present as the chief guest with Pirojpur Zila Parishad Chairman Mahiuddin Maharaj in the chair.

Deputy Commissioner Md Khairul Alam Sheikh and Bhandaria Upazila Nirbahi Officer and municipality administrator Shahin Akter Sumi were present at the function.

## PATHAR KALI MELA ON THAKURGAON BORDER

# An opportunity to meet near and dear ones

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

On the occasion of decades-old traditional Pathar Kali Mela, a remarkable picture was witnessed at Gobindapur border in Haripur upazila on Friday when thousands of Bangla speaking people from both sides of the border got an opportunity to meet their relatives.

Standing on both sides of the barbed wire fence between border pillar No 345 and 346 near Kochal and Chapshar area, people of the two neighbouring countries exchanged greetings and talked happily with their near and dear ones for couple of hours.

People from different districts of Bangladesh and India, who came to meet their relatives, were seen sharing various gifts and other items like biscuits, chanachur, pens and clothes.

Seeing relatives or other family members after a long time, many could not check their emotion.

held on the bank of the Kuli river on the first Friday after Shama Puja (Kali Puja) since the British era, said Nagen Kumer Pal, president of mela udjapon committee.

The arrangement was delayed this year due to standing paddy plants on vast tracts of land on both sides of the border, he said.

After the partition in 1947, meeting of relatives living in two different countries became very hard, especially for those who could not afford expenditure for the government approved procedures, a number of people said.

Fifty-three-year-old Arati Rani of Vanore village in Ranishankoil upazila, who came to meet her daughter and newborn grandson from Hemtabad village under Uttar Dinajpur district in Pashchimbanga, said the barbed fence obstructed her from taking the kid on her lap.

A BGB official, seeking anonymity, said they unofficially allow people living in the nearby districts to meet their relatives near the barbed wire.



On the occasion of decades-old Pathar Kali Mela, thousands of Bangla speaking people of Bangladesh and neighbouring India gather at Gobindapur border in Thakurgaon's Haripur upazila on Friday. PHOTO: STAR