

Kuakata road at risk of collapse

Brick kilns take earth from ditch beside highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Kuakata-Patuakhali highway is under risk of collapsing as a brick kiln owner has been cutting earth beside the highway in Amtali upazila of Barguna for the last two weeks.

Cracks have developed in many places beside the highway and it might collapse anytime.

Md Liton Mia, a businessman of Dhaka, set up a brick kiln in Sekandarkhali area in 2015. He sold it to Saiful Islam of Baithakata village in 2017.

Saiful does not have permission from the deputy commissioner's (DC) office, although it is mandatory to take environmental clearance and license from the DC of the district concerned before operating a brick kiln.

Saiful also closed a local canal and farmers are facing water shortage for irrigation.



Men of a brick kiln have been cutting earth from beside Kuakata-Patuakhali highway at Sekandarkhali in Amtali upazila of Barguna, putting the highway at the risk of collapse. The picture was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

Assistant Commissioner (land) in the upazila Md Rezaul Karim visited the area on January 20 and found that the allegation was true. He conducted a mobile court and fined Saiful Tk 50,000. The mobile court also asked Saiful to fill up the ditch with earth within the next 15 days.

Saiful failed to show the necessary papers, including clearance from the environment department and license from the DC office.

"I will fill up the ditch with earth as per instruction from the mobile court," he said.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Sarwar Hossain said they have sent a report over the brick kiln to the DC office for taking appropriate steps.

"We will take legal steps if he fails to fill up the ditch," he added.

STABBING OF COLLEGE GIRL

Stalker still at large

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Seven days into stabbing of a college girl, police are yet to arrest the culprit, her stalker.

The 18-year-old victim is a first year honours student of Government Mominunnesa Girls' College in the town, and a resident of Fulbaria upazila. She is now undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

A resident of the town, Abul Kashem, 22, distant cousin of the girl, often stalked the girl, said family members. The accused is a garment worker.

Body parts stolen from grave: 3 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Three people, including two women, were arrested yesterday allegedly for stealing parts from a dead body at a graveyard in Thakurgaon municipality area.

The arrestees are Ripon, 22, his grandmother Sahera Khatun, 55, and one Anwara Begum, 46, of Hathathosti area in the upazila.

Local people spotted the body of one Barek Mia, 105, who was buried on Saturday, lying after being dug out from the grave at Munshipara graveyard in the morning and found its two fingers cut off, one Mohammad Helal of the village said.

On suspicion, villagers vandalised Ripon's house as his grandmother Sahera is an alleged black magic practitioner.

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Cold spell, labour crisis hamper Boro farming

K M REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

Prolonged cold spell and high wages of farm labourers hamper Boro cultivation in north-eastern Sundarganj upazila under the district, during the peak period for transplanting the seedlings in the low-lying fields.

Boro seedbeds in different areas are turning reddish due to cold injuries, and normal growth of seedlings is badly hampered while labourers face utter difficulties in plucking short seedlings and transplanting those in fields due to cold spell and dense fog, said farmers.

Amid the adverse weather, labourers often refuse to work in swampy Boro fields and those who agree to work demand higher wages.

"In this biting cold, a farm labourer charges Tk 500 per day, whereas in normal situation the wage would be between Tk 250 to Tk 300," said Abul Kashem, a farmer of Tarapur.

"We have to work amid the unbearable condition in the icy cold swampy Boro fields with bare feet

and hands," said Taleb Mia, a farm labourer of the area.

"As my two-decimal plots of Boro seedlings have started dying due to persistent cold spell and foggy weather, it needs immediate plucking. But the work is being delayed due to crisis of labourers," said Tara Mia, another farmer of Santiram.

"Immediate transplantation of Boro seedlings is required for the low lying areas, because late transplanted seedlings may go under rainwater before harvest," said Alifuddin, a sharecropper of Belka.

According to upazila agriculture department, farmers have prepared Boro seedbeds on 13,085 hectares of land in Sundarganj upazila this season while transplanting has been completed on only ten percent of the targeted area.

"This time longstanding cold wave and thick fog adversely affects Boro seedlings, but hopefully, overall Boro cultivation would not be affected that much despite a bit late cultivation," said Rashedul Islam, upazila agriculture officer, Sundarganj.

Man to walk gallows for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A court here on Wednesday sentenced a man to death for killing a man in Kamalganj upazila of the district in 2005.

Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam of Additional District and Sessions Judges' Court handed down the verdict after examining the records and witnesses.

The convict is Ashid Mia, 45, of Kataebel village in the upazila.

According to the prosecution, Ashid and Modorish Mia had a long dispute over a land in the village. At one stage, Ashid planned to kill Modorish.

On the morning of October 15 in 2005, Ashid and his men attacked Modorish while he was going to Kataebel village and stabbed him indiscriminately, leaving him dead on the spot.

DU students

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Haq, an associate professor of the department, said, "The students of this university have the right to place their logical demands before the VC, but he cannot suppress them with the help of a particular student body."

The two recent attacks on students were carried out to prevent them from staging demonstrations. And now, the authorities are terming the protestors

outsiders only to hide the facts," the teacher said.

Tarek Hasan, who took part in the protest programme, said, "We have covered our mouths with black cloth as the authorities are trying to gag us."

On Tuesday, a group of protesters -- comprising both students and leaders and activists of left-leaning student organisations -- were demonstrating inside the VC office, demanding punishment for the BCL

men who had allegedly assaulted some female students during their January 15 sit-in.

Several hundred BCL men from the DU as well as from outside attacked the protesters to "rescue" DU Vice Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman as he was kept confined in front of his office by the demonstrators.

At least 50 male and female students and two journalists were injured in that attack.

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