

# Work not ended in a decade

People suffer for lack of a bridge over Morachang canal in Laxmichhari upazila for long

SAIKAT DEWAN, Khagrachhari

About half of the population of Laxmichhari upazila are being deprived of different facilities like health and medical services for many years due to lack of a bridge over Morachang canal.

Besides, about 26 kilometres of the 30 kilometre-long Laxmichhari-Barmachhari road is becoming unfit for use as no repair work was done for long.

Over a decade ago, Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) started the construction of a bridge over Morachang canal at Jatindra Karbaripara in the upazila.

But for some unknown reasons, the construction work stopped midway.

The road is the only way of communication between Barmachhari union and the upazila headquarters, said Barmachhari Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Hari Mohan Chakma.

In the dry season, pedestrians and motorcycles can cross the canal by using an alternative earthen-road beside the bridge, but

during the rainy season people can't even walk through or cross it on foot, he added.

Laxmichhari Sadar UP Chairman Prabil Chakma said thousands of people face serious difficulties while using Laxmichhari-Barmachhari road because of the incomplete bridge.

Laxmichhari Upazila Parishad Chairman Super Jyoti Chakma said the upazila consists of three unions and half of the population use the road.

Local people have informed the officials concerned on several occasions in this regard but are yet to get any result, he said, adding that livelihoods of the local people will surely improve once the bridge is completed.

Laxmichhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Zahid Iqbal said currently three bridges in the upazila are lying incomplete.

Every monsoon, the whole Barmachhari union remains disconnected from the upazila headquarters, the UNO said, adding the construction work of all the incomplete roads and bridges will start very soon.



This important bridge over Morachang Canal in Khagrachhari's Laxmichhari upazila has remained incomplete for more than a decade now, depriving half of the upazila population of different facilities.

PHOTO: STAR

# BSF throws bomb on Bangladeshis

Two alleged cattle smugglers injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Two Bangladesh nationals were injured as a crude bomb thrown by the members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) blasted on the border in Sapahar upazila of Naogaon yesterday.

The injured are Golam Hossain, 22, son of Alfaz Hossain, and Md Babu, 25, son of Nazrul Mondal of Boldiaghat village in Sapahar.

The incident took place near pillar No 238 of India-Bangladesh border at Kalmudanga under Sapahar upazila around 5:00am.

According to the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) officials, a group of alleged cattle smugglers went to India through Kalmudanga border on Wednesday night.

When they were returning home with cows through the same route, the BSF members chased them and at one stage threw crude bombs, leaving the two injured.

Other members of the group brought them inside Bangladesh territory and they took treatment at upazila health complex, said locals quoting family members.

"We strongly protested the incident," said Musa Kalamullah, commander of Kalmudanga BGB camp.

## Lawyer assaulted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Former president of Pirojpur Bar Association and former public prosecutor Md Faruk Sarder was assaulted by criminals in the town yesterday.

Faruk is the supporter of independent president candidate of Pirojpur Lawyers' Association advocate Kanai Lal Biswas.

The incident took place when the former PP was returning home from the court after casting his vote in the bar election around 1:00pm.

He blamed the men of Awami League backed president candidate Khan M Alauddin, but Alauddin refuted the allegation of attack on Faruk.

## Slain wife hospitalised!

Saudi expat husband held while fleeing clinic

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A Saudi Arabia expatriate was arrested yesterday while he was fleeing, leaving the body of his slain wife at a local clinic in Sadar upazila of the district.

The arrestee is Billal Miah, son of late Abdul Khaleq of Raja Kha village. The deceased, Jharna Begum, 31, was daughter of late Abdur Razzak of Naught village in Ashuganj upazila and mother of two sons.

Sadar Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC-Investigation) Md Ziaul Hoque said Billal allegedly strangled his wife on Wednesday night as a sequel to an alleged illicit relation between him and a neighbouring woman.

Victim's brother Helal Uddin said Billal had married his sister two years ago after returning from Saudi Arabia. Billal used to torture his sister Jharna and stopped providing maintenance to her and their sons, as a result, they often locked in quarrels, Helal added.

After killing Jharna, Billal took the body to The Dutch Bangla Diagnostic and Hospital at Old Jail Road in the town on the advice of his brother Oliullah, a shareholder of the hospital, saying that she was a critical patient. Billal then called Helal saying that Jharna is critically ill. Knowing that Billal used to torture his sister Jharna, Helal informed the police, who arrested Billal from the hospital while Oliullah managed to escape.

The OC said it is primarily assumed that family quarrel was the reason behind the murder and Billal was detained on a complaint by the victim's family.

## Girl gives birth during SSC exam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Halfway into her SSC examination yesterday, an examinee gave birth to a child in Bochaganj upazila of the district.

Shila Akter, 17, daughter of Mohammad Nazimuddin of Chengan village, sat for her examinations from ZB Smriti High School.

Shila's parents married her off with Mohammad Mamun of Uchitpur village in Kaharol upazila of the district.

Shila was determined to continue her study even after the marriage. Mamun said, adding that his wife has been staying at her parents' house and preparing for the SSC examinations.

Shila sat for the examination at Setabganj Pilot High School centre, which started at 10:00am.

Around 11:30am, she felt severe labour pain and informed the invigilator of the matter.

The authorities concerned immediately called an ambulance and shifted the girl to Bochaganj Upazila Health Complex, where she gave birth to a baby boy, said Aminul Islam, secretary of the centre.

The mother and the baby boy are doing well, said Dr Nazmul Islam of the complex.



More than 2,500 bighas of land in Burungi Beel under Saghata upazila of Gaibandha has remained under water and covered by hyacinth for many years due to lack of an outlet for the stagnant water. The picture was taken recently.

## WATERLOGGING IN BURUNGI BEEL

# Huge area lying unused for years in Gaibandha

KM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

No crop has been cultivated for years on nearly 2,500 bighas of land due to longstanding waterlogging in Burungi Beel of Saghata upazila.

The beel area is surrounded by a road-cum-dyke that prevents drainage of water.

For want of adequate drainage, the area has turned into a wetland covered by hyacinth and other creepers and plants, preventing hundreds of farmers from cultivation.

Vast tracts of cultivable land have turned into marshy land due to rain and floodwater at Gachabari, Burungi, Pathanpara, Osmanerpara, Chandanpat and Kachua villages. The area of waterlogging is expanding every year, creating panic among the farmers.

Locals said there was an outlet canal a decade ago across Kachua village to drain

out water to the Katakali river, but the canal has been gradually filled up with silt due to lack of proper excavation. As a result, cultivation of Aman and Boro crops on the marshy land has become uncertain. Taking a risk, farmers cultivated Boro in the beel area after removing the weeds and hyacinth, but the paddy went under rain water prior to harvesting, so they incurred heavy loss.

Farmer Sabur Hossain said they could not cultivate paddy or other crops on the marshy land that has remained unusable for years. The stagnant water has to be removed, but no one is taking any step to do it, he added.

"I removed hyacinth and other garbage from 19 decimals of marshy lands in the current season, spending Tk 1,500, just for planting Boro seedlings, but I don't know whether the crop can be harvested duly," said Rahimul Islam of Gachabari village.

Hafizer Rahman of the village said some farmers have already switched to other professions as they could not cultivate on their lands due to stagnant water.

Ayub Hossain of Burungi village said if the government builds outlet channels for discharging stagnant water from Burungi Beel, vast tracts of land could be made suitable for cultivation of Aman and Boro crops.

Kachua Union Parishad Chairman Mahbubur Rahman said recovery of cultivable land was discussed at the upazila parishad meeting.

Saghatia Upazila Agriculture Officer AKM Mobinuzzaman said all the sub-assistant agriculture officers have been instructed to submit reports on agriculture lands that have remained unused for years due to waterlogging. He said steps are being taken to bring the lands under crop farming.

## 23 BNP, Jamaat men sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Twenty-three BNP and Jamaat activists were sent to jail yesterday after they were produced before a Jessore court.

Police arrested 13 of them from Sharsha upazila and 10 from Benapole and seized 25 bombs from their possession during drives in different areas.

The arrestees include Benapole Municipality Jamaat Secretary Alhaj Osman Gani, Benapole Municipal Commissioner Amirul Islam, Sharsha Thana Chhatra Dal Senior Vice-president Al Mamun Bablu, Publicity Secretary Raihanuzzaman Dipu and union and ward level activists.

## Get ready for both polls, protests

FROM PAGE 1

"Madam [Khaleda] in her speech will also explain BNP's politics in the coming days," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told The Daily Star yesterday. "She will call for making preparation to face any challenge."

A total of 502 executive committee members, including BNP's central and district leaders as well as the presidents and general secretaries of the party's front and associate bodies, will meet tomorrow for the first time since the formation of the committee in 2016.

The BNP chairperson, who would chair the meeting starting at 10:00am, would listen to the grassroots leaders and give them guidelines for the next course of action, said party sources.

Khaleda, who is facing 32 cases, has appeared before a special court in Bakshibazar in connection with the Zia Charitable Trust graft case

for three consecutive days this week.

There have already been a lot of discussions in the country's political arena about February 8, when the verdict in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case would be delivered.

The party as well as the law enforcers are highly cautious ahead of the day.

Police have a hunch about BNP men trying to create anarchy if the verdict goes against Khaleda. The party, on the other hand, alleged that the law enforcers have launched a crackdown on its men ahead of the verdict.

Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu, organising secretary of the BNP, said, "The government has set a trap to push the BNP into the path of confrontation. Creating anarchic situation in the country, it is going to pass the blame on the BNP and hold a one-sided election again. But this time, we will not give it any such scope."

The BNP had boycotted the January 5, 2014 parliamentary elections, demanding the election be held under a non-partisan interim government. A total of 153 lawmakers were elected uncontested in that polls.

Sheikh Sujat Mia, an executive committee member of the party, said, "We want to participate in the election and this time, we will not leave the field without challenging..."

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the chief of AL, formally launched the party's election campaign. At a rally in Sylhet, she sought vote for "boat", the electoral symbol of the AL, to make "Bangladesh a developed and prosperous country".

**NO INTRA-PARTY FEUD**  
BNP leaders said they believed that the party has no "intra-party crisis" right now as all the top leaders are united.

"If Khaleda Zia is in trouble, the whole party will be in trouble," said Fazlul Huq Milon, organising secretary of the party.

Party insiders, however, said the party would run as usual even if the party chief was convicted in the graft case.

"There was an organisational crisis during the Fakhrudin-Moeen Uddin period. But this time, there will be no such crisis. All the leaders are united," said a senior BNP leader, wishing not to be named.

Khaleda Zia had held meetings with the party's standing committee members and also with the alliance leaders on Saturday and Sunday. In both the meetings, she urged her party and alliance colleagues to remain united at any cost in the coming days.

Party leaders fear the government may try to split the BNP and the 20-party alliance if Khaleda is convicted.

## Dhaka hopes

FROM PAGE 20

when the British minister visits Bangladesh.

The important focus of Boris Johnson visit is to demonstrate solidarity with Bangladesh over the Rohingya issue as the country is severely affected by the crisis in neighbouring Myanmar.

The trip is also expected to further strengthen the closer bilateral relations between Dhaka and London.

The British government on March 8, 2016 slapped the ban on direct cargo flights from Dhaka to London after Biman failed to meet some international security requirements.

In addition to the UK, the European Union, where more than 54 percent of Bangladesh's exports are headed, has also declared the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport a "red zone" due to insufficient safety and security measures, following the lead of

the UK, Australia and Germany.

With the ban in place, the EU-bound cargo airlines from Bangladesh have to rescreen goods in a third country, preferably Dubai, Qatar, Thailand and India.

The ban caused a huge loss for Bangladesh as Biman was the only carrier that operates direct flights between Dhaka and London and is now running four flights a week.

Before the ban, Biman used to earn Tk 40 lakh to Tk 50 lakh each flight from carrying cargoes. Some 25 to 30 tonnes of goods, mostly apparel and vegetables were shipped in each of the flights to London.

After the ban was imposed, the government appointed British company Redline Aviation Security Limited Seven to meet safety requirements.

Although the British government called for further improvement of the situation,

diplomatic sources said the UK and other important Western countries are now satisfied as Bangladesh has made laudable progress in safety and security services at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

As of now, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh has set up the ETD (explosives trace detection) and other necessary machines in addition to deployment of the British company for screening of cargo goods.

The British minister during his visit will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other high government officials apart from his meeting with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali.

British Secretary of State Boris Johnson is also expected to visit Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar to see the situation of Myanmar nationals, who fled Rakhine State amid ethnic cleansing.