

Kalihati traffic situation starts improving

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The traffic situation in the town has started to improve after deployment of traffic police at Kalihati Bus Stand yesterday.

Earlier, the superintendent of police here promised to deploy traffic police to keep the Tangail-Mymensingh Road free from jam.

The people at a rally on April 21 demanded deployment of police at the traffic-jam prone Kalihati Bus Stand area. Kalihati police organised the rally against drug abuse and militancy.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Sanjit Kumar Roy at the rally promised to meet the demand as soon as possible.

Following his direction, police launched a drive yesterday to control the traffic, said Kalihati Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mosharaf Hossain.

They also seized 65 motorcycles as the riders were not following traffic rules, the OC said.

"Traffic congestion at Kalihati Bus Stand on Tangail-Mymensingh Road was a regular matter, much to the sufferings of passengers and transport workers," said Sohel Rana, a rights activist in Kalihati.

"The situation started improving just after deployment of traffic police at the bus stand. I want to thank the SP as he has kept his promise within a very short time," he added.



The approach roads to the bridge from Mamudnagar village to Postkamari village in Shikderbari area under Nagarpur upazila of Tangail are in awful condition due to lack of proper earth-filling work.

PHOTO: STAR

Bridge without approach roads

The roads of the bridge in Nagarpur upazila are in awful condition

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The approach roads to a bridge in Nagarpur upazila are in awful condition as the earth-filling work was not done properly, making it very difficult to cross and causing suffering to the commuters.

Disaster management ministry constructed the 20-foot-long bridge over a ditch on an earthen road from Mamudnagar village to Postkamari village in Shikderbari area in 2015-16 fiscal year at a cost of Tk 15.91 lakh.

People of several villages use the road for going to the upazila headquarters. Moreover, hundreds of students use it to go to their schools and colleges, said Jamir Uddin of Mamudnagar.

Although people can use an alternative way during the dry season, they face sufferings during the wet season, he added.

Farmers face problems taking their produce, including a large amount of vegetables, to the markets in the upazila headquarters,

Jamir said, adding that they need to spend more money to go via the alternative way.

The contractor completed construction of the bridge in June in 2016 and left without properly doing the earth filling works on the approach roads, leaving the local people to suffer, Solaiman Shikder of the village said.

The contractor Abdul Khalek, however, claimed that they had done the necessary earth-filling works on the approaches of the

bridge, but the filled earth was later washed away by heavy rain.

Mamudnagar Union Parishad Chairman Anwar Hossain said they brought the matter to the notice of the authorities concerned several times.

Upazila Project Implementation Officer Shahin Begum said they have informed the authorities concerned about the matter. Funds will be allocated for the earth-filling work on the approaches of the bridge as soon as possible, she added.

Sreemangal abuzz with tourists

Awful roads scare visitors in Jaflong

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The scenic tourist spots of Sreemangal upazila in the district are buzzing with tourists, as many people from different places came to visit the area during the weeklong vacation.

The preferred areas for the tourists are Sreemangal tea gardens, Bangladesh Tea Research Institute, Tea Museum, Bangladesh Wildlife Sheba Foundation, Hail Haor, Baikka Beel, Mini Zoo, Birds Park, Seven Colour Tea Cabin, Cha Konna Memorial, Lawacherra forest, Badhyabhumi-71, Monipuri village, Khasi village in Sreemangal.

"Tourism business in the area has increased during the holidays," said Arman Khan, assistant general manager of Sreemangal Grand Sultan Tea resort.

The occupancy rates in hotels and resorts in popular tourist destinations are very high during the holidays of Buddha Purnima, May Day and Shab-e-Barat.

"We are selling a large number of tickets this time. Over 400 tickets have been sold in last two hours," ticket seller Munim Mia said at the entrance of Lawacherra forest on Wednesday morning.

"I am now selling Monipuri textile items worth Tk 5,000 to Tk 8,000 daily at our shop during whereas it was Tk 1,000 to Tk 2,000 in usual time," said Mahmudur Rahman, a salesman at Monipuri market in Sreemangal.

Meanwhile, famous tourist spots, including Jaflong in Sylhet, see only a small number of visitors as around 20 kilometres of Sylhet-Jaflong highway from Jaintapur to Jaflong is lying in an awfully dilapidated condition.

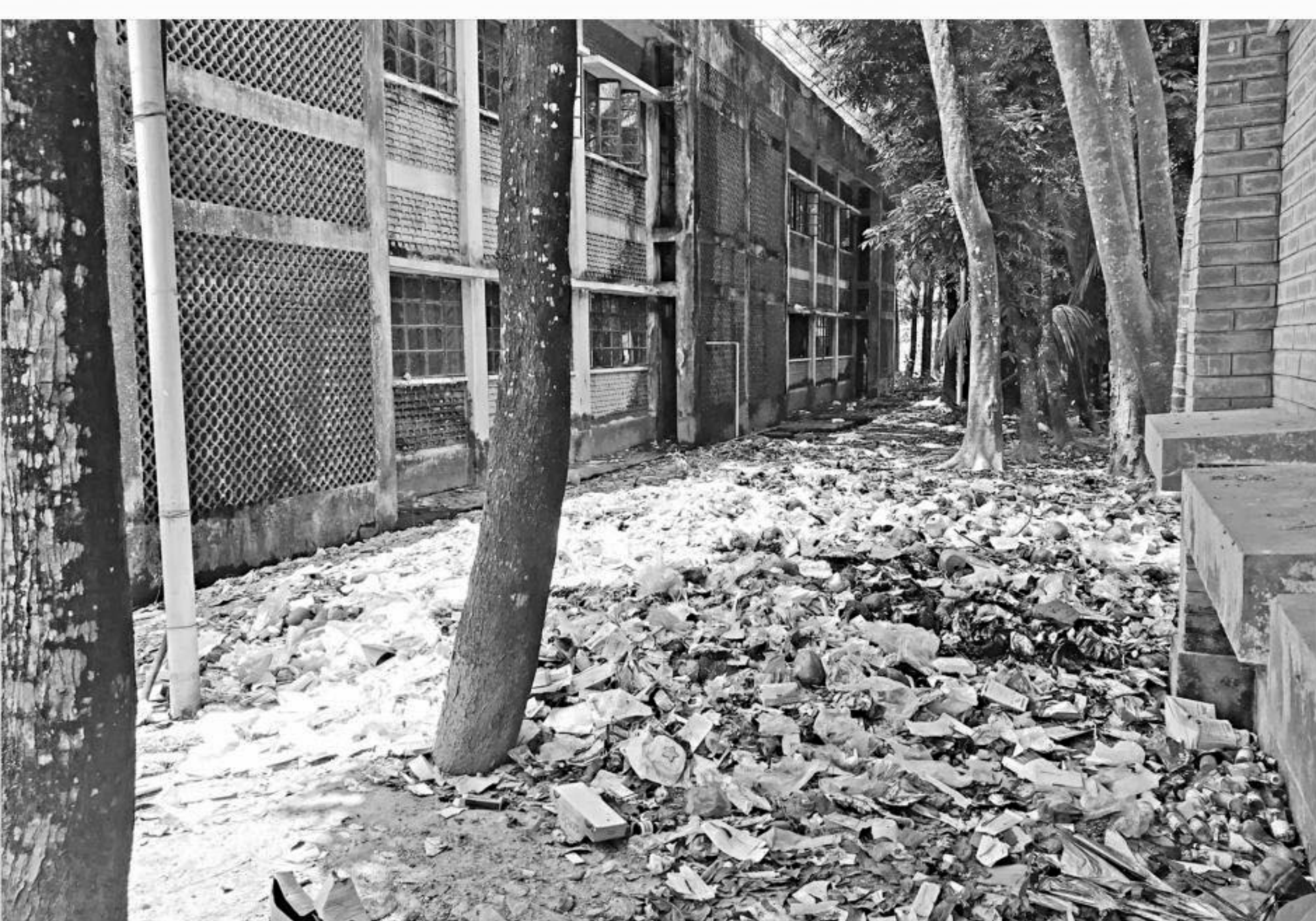
While visiting the road on Tuesday, this correspondent saw numerous potholes on the highway, especially at Jaflong, Mamar Dokan, Mohammadpur, Guchhagram, Tamabil land port, Naljuri, Mokambari, Alubagan, Mokampunji, Sripur, Assampara, Rangpani, Biraimara, Changil, Jaintipur Bazar and Sarighat.

"A large number of tourists from across the country used to visit Sylhet's Jaflong and Lalakhal during holidays but the number sees gradual decline due to the roads' poor condition," said Md Moin Uddin Khan, a tourist guide at Jaflong.

"We felt scared while travelling on the potholed road," said Sukumar Biswas, a government official who came from Khulna with family to visit Lalakhal and Jaflong in Sylhet.

It takes two hours to cross the 20-km part of the highway, said Zaman Mia, driver of a bus plying the route.

Hazi Azir Uddin, president of Jaflong Truck Owners Association, said, "Accidents have increased due to the bad condition of the road. We are also incurring huge loss due to the damage to the vehicles caused while plying the rough road."



Clinical wastes are dumped indiscriminately on the campus of Amtoli Upazila Health Complex in Barguna. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Health complex awash with waste

Few steps taken to remove the waste

SOHRAB HOSSAIN with ANDREW EAGLE

The smell of Amtoli Upazila Health Complex in Barguna hardly inspires confidence. It isn't easy to trust a medical facility that isn't serious about hygiene. Since its establishment in 1989, the 31-bed facility has taken few steps to rein in a rising tide of waste, dumped in and around a small concrete rubbish bin behind the hospital.

"We can hardly visit our patient because of the stench," says one patient's relative, Golam Rahman.

"A hospital's grounds should be tidy," says another visiting relative, Maya Begum. "We can't stay here long due to the smell, and it's not in patients' best interests. The garbage should be removed regularly."

It isn't only the smell that disturbs visitors, staff and patients. The rotting clinical and patient waste, among all sorts of other refuse, attracts foraging cats, dogs and other animals.

"Children often play there," says Golam. "They take different items like dirty pots and syringes that may cause them serious harm."

The upazila health office and the offices of other key staff are situated on the ground floor of the main building, with a women's ward on the first floor. A residential building for complex employees is nearby. The stench of rubbish pervades all of these areas.

When The Daily Star raised the issue with the upazila's health and family planning officer, Dr Shamkar Prosad Odhikari, he said immediate action would be taken to remove the waste, after consultation with the mayor.

Delay in poor's job scheme protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Over 100 people, including women, brought out a procession yesterday, protesting the delay in starting of the employment programme for the ultra poor people at Kholahati union in Sadar upazila.

The agitators paraded the main roads chanting slogans for starting the programme soon. Later, they handed over a memorandum to Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mohammed Shafiqur Rahman for immediate starting of 40-days employment programme for destitute people.

The memo also mentioned that the earth-cutting programme for repair of village roads has already started in other unions, but Kholahati Union Parishad is yet to start the programme for unknown reasons. They also demanded immediate restoration of the programme for destitute women.

The protestors also pointed out that the destitute men and women remained deprived of wages during these hard days of crisis.

The UNO said Kholahati Union Parishad is yet to start the programme due to some internal problems, however, the programme will be implemented by the upazila parishad within the next three days.

KILLING OF SIX-YR-OLD BOY Two confess crime, another on remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A court here yesterday granted two-day remand for an accused in a case for killing six-year-old boy Labib after kidnapping him for ransom.

The Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Waheduzzaman gave the order after the hearing on a five-day remand prayer for the accused, Babul, 35, son of Khabir Hossain of Jhawla village in Sadar upazila, sought by investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub-inspector Shafiqul Islam, said Court Inspector Abdul Kader.

Earlier, two other accused -- Faisal Khandakar, 24, son of late Abdur Rahman of the village, and Sanuar Hossain, 24, son of Younus Ali of Purbo Bashchora village, gave confessional statement before a court after the duo along with Babul were produced there on April 28, said the court inspector.

Deceased's mother Laboni Begum of Jhawla village filed the murder case accusing Faisal, Sanuar and Babul with Sadar Police Station on April 27, said IO Shafiqul.

"Labib, son of Yousof, an expatriate living in Oman, went missing from near their house on April 26 afternoon. Hours later, Laboni got a phone call from an unidentified person who asked her to take her son from Haluaghat in Mymensingh," he said.

"She informed police of the matter and filed a general diary with Narundi Police Investigation Centre under Sadar Police Station on the night of April 26.

Locals found Labib lying unconscious in a paddy field, around 500-600 yards from their house around 1:30am on April 27.

"He was rushed to Jamalpur General Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead. After tracking the phone number from which Laboni received the call, police arrested the three accused on April 27," said the IO.

"They gave a confessional statement to the police that they abducted the boy for ransom and made the boy take fruit juice mixed with sedative that eventually led to his death. Later they made the confession to the court," he added.

Cop, 2 others arrested with Yaba in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Three people, including a police constable, were arrested with Yaba pills from Naumahal Saroda Ghosh Road area in the town on Wednesday night.

The arrestees are Constable Muksedul Islam, 32, Sourav, 20, of College Road area, and Debashish, 25, of Sunamganj.

Muksedul is posted at Mymensingh Police Lines, said police.

On information, a police team raided the rented house of the constable in Naumahal Saroda Ghosh Road area and arrested them, said Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Khandaker Shaker Ahmed.

Police also seized 800 Yaba pills from their possession, the OC added.

Police produced the arrestees before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court yesterday that sent them to jail, the OC said.

A case was filed with the police station.

Muddy road cause of suffering

The road in Sarail upazila becomes dilapidated when it rains

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Absence of a paved road in Shahzadapur village seriously hampers communication between the village, district town and Sarail upazila headquarters, causing immense problems for residents of three villages.

About 30 thousand people of three adjacent villages cannot avail education and health facilities and are deprived of development opportunities due to the absence of communication.

While visiting the area recently, this correspondent found that the four kilometre portion of the road from Molaish bridge to Shahzadapur Bazar had become muddy due to rain. Passengers and drivers had to push the CNG-run auto-rickshaws to cross this muddy portion.

Locals said only CNG-run auto-rickshaws can ply this road, but even those cannot cross during rainy season as one day's rain makes the road unusable for around three days.

Shahzadapur Union Parishad Chairman Rafiqul Islam Khokon said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had promised to construct a paved road eight years ago at the request of local lawmaker Ziaul Haque Mridha. Though eight years have elapsed, no steps have been taken to build the road.

Students, teachers, traders, farmers, drivers of CNG-run auto-



PHOTO: MASUK HRIDDOY

The four-kilometre section of the unpaved road from Molaish bridge to Shahzadapur Bazar in Sarail upazila of Brahmanbaria becomes unusable for days after one day's rain. The photo was taken a few days ago.

rickshaws and villagers complained that for the last eight years they have not seen any development of the road. They got only false hope, promise, soil test and measurement of the road by high officials, villagers said.

Kamal Mia of Shahzadapur said they formed human chains and held different programmes demanding construction of the road, but to no effect. "We started to dream after the promise made by the prime minister, but our dream has not been fulfilled," he added.

"We cannot even walk to our college during the monsoon season as the rain-hit road becomes unfit for movement," said Geeta Rani Das of the village.

Amol Chandra Das, an elderly resident of the village, said the people of Dowriya, Neyamotpur and Shahzadapur villages have been most backward in respect of education only because of the four kilometre portion of the road.

They face immense problems taking patients to the upazila health complex, he said, adding that farm-

ers suffer loss as they cannot take their produce to the markets.

CNG driver Polash Mia of Neyamotpur village said it is very risky to move on the road, adding that accidents take place regularly and the parts of the vehicles get damaged.

Sarail upazila Local Government Engineering Department Assistant Engineer Emdadul Haque said the project proposal for construction of the road is under process in Dhaka. It may take six more months to start construction work, he added.