



The ground of Kahetura Government Primary School in Nasirnagar upazila of Brahmanbaria has been under stagnant water for over four months due to absence of a drainage system.

PHOTO: STAR

School ground under water for four months

Mosquitoes breed on stagnant water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

The ground of Kahetura Government Primary School ground in Kunda union under Nasirnagar upazila has remained under stagnant water for over four months due to absence of proper drainage system.

Villagers said students of the school have to wade through the water to go to the classrooms, and foul smell and teeming mosquitoes spoil the environment.

The school was established in 1919 and has 695 students. It is the biggest primary school in the union.

Headmaster Md Mosharraf Hossain said assembly has not been held there for around four months due to the stagnant water.

Rimon Das, a Class V student, said water has not entered the classrooms, but the waterlogged field has become a breeding ground of mosquitoes.

Ward Member of Kunda Union

Parishad Malai Mia said there was no habitation beside the school once, but houses have been built on three sides of the school and a brick road crosses the west side of the school now. The school ground is comparatively lower than the road and adjoining area, as a result, rainwater remains stagnant on the ground.

He added that the ground needs earth filling so that water cannot remain there.

The headmaster said the upazila administration has taken up a plan to build a 134-foot-long drain from the school to a nearby pond. The local lawmaker asked the headmaster and the UNO to start earth filling soon.

"We have informed the upazila nirbahi officer about the situation. He has approved a project by the local union parishad to build a drain," Nasirnagar Upazila Primary Education Officer Umme Salma told this correspondent.

Construction of the drain will start soon, she added.

Stalker's brutality lands college girl in hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A college girl is groaning in pain at Dimla Upazila Health Complex in the district for the last two days as a 'rejected' youth and his associates beat her mercilessly on way to college near Motir Bazar on Dimla-Sutibari road on Monday morning.

The victim, Samina Akhtar Shima, 17, daughter of farmer Md Abdur Rahim of Pashchim Kharibaari village, yesterday filed a case with Dimla Police Station accusing Shamim, 20, son of Amzad Ali of the same village, as main accused along with three others as his accomplice.

Samina is an intermediate second year student of Gaya-Kharibari Women's College in Dimla upazila.

"There are swellings in the victim's ears, eyes, face and other parts

of the body as she was badly beaten. She is suffering from acute pain all over the body," said Dr Md Rasheduzzaman, resident medical officer of the health complex.

Lying on hospital bed, Samina told this correspondent that Shamim, who was disturbing her on way to college for long, offered her to establish illicit relation several times, which she rejected.

"On Monday morning, I reached near Motir Bazar when Shamim along with three others intercepted and angrily asked why I rejected his offer.

"As I told him to clear my way, Shamim started beating and kicking me, making me fall on the road. The three others kept encircling me during the time," she added.

Hearing her scream, locals

rushed to the spot to rescue her. They arranged sending her to Dimla Upazila Health Complex.

"Before fleeing, Shamim threatened to throw acid on me if I don't accept his offer next time," the victim said.

Sitting beside Samina at the hospital bed, her mother Jahanara Begum said, "Following our complaint, arbitration was held at the local union parishad (UP) office a few days ago. There the UP chairman warned Shamim not to disturb the girl. But the spoilt boy ignored the warning and lastly made the brutal attack."

Md Mofizuddin, officer in charge of local police station, said, "I visited the victim in the hospital to take the victim's deposition. We are trying to arrest the accused."

Narsingdi's new flavour

Lotkons transform the district, with new income for farmers and export potential

MASUK HRIDOY with ANDREW EAGLE

To visit Morjal on the Dhaka-to-Sylhet highway in Narsingdi's Raipura upazila is to experience unexpected bounty, a kind of lotkon paradise. Every morning, the fair-like wholesale market for the nutritious fruit jostles with growers and traders. Daily sales reach Tk 80 lakh. It's not a bad achievement for a crop that is relatively new to the district; and Morjal isn't alone.

Across Narsingdi, up to 25,000 farmers have opted to grow lotkons. They hope to make the most of burgeoning domestic demand and have an eye on export potential.

"At a cost of around Tk 40,000, I grew lotkons on ten bighas of land this year," says Mahabub Mia, from Kamrabo in adjacent Shibpur upazila. "Each tree will produce up to 130 kilograms of fruit per annum, over a period of two decades. Add to that,

demand is good. I've already sold Tk 1.5 lakh of the fruit."

"I had hoped to buy ninety maunds of lotkons today," says Sumon Mia, a wholesaler from Zajira who has made his way to the market in Morjal. "But I arrived a little late so could only buy seventy maunds."

"Prices are good," notes Humayon Kabir Nahid, a satisfied grower from Shibpur's Betagia village. "Per maund, lotkons sell for anywhere between Tk 1,600 and Tk 3,500."

According to the deputy director of the agriculture department in Narsingdi, Latafat Hossain, lotkons have risen in popularity among the district's farmers since 1990. "Some years ago a number of farmers established small lotkon orchards on a trial basis, in areas of reddish soil in Shibpur and Belabo upazilas," he says. "Their success has been quite remarkable."

Last year Narsingdi produced 20,000 tonnes of lotkons to a value of around Tk 60 crore. While large-scale export processes are yet to become entrenched, the department estimates around 50 tonnes was sent overseas by small-scale exporters, to the Middle East and Europe in particular.

"Not long ago, lotkon orchards covered around 10 hectares in Narsingdi," says Hossain. "This year the fruit has been cultivated on 1,469 hectares in six upazilas, especially in Shibpur."

"Particularly in the hilly areas of reddish soil, the lotkon transformation is significant," says Narsingdi's deputy commissioner, Syeda Farhana Kawnine. "A fruit that was unfamiliar until recently, lotkons have quickly become the main income source for most families in Shibpur, Belabo and Raipura upazilas. Thanks to lotkons, unemployment is gone."



A lotkon garden at Chaitonno village in Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

Tied up, girl rescued from school toilet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A girl with her hands and mouth tied with a scarf was rescued from the toilet of her school here yesterday.

The victim is Israt Jahan Ispa, 12, a Class VI student at Bhandaria Thana Girls' High School.

Headmaster Md Mujibur Rahman said Ispa came to school before classes began and went to the toilet on the second floor.

When other girls went to the toilet, they found that it was locked from inside. They informed the teachers about the matter.

The teachers found the girl lying on the toilet's floor.

Woman's body found in madrasa septic tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A woman was found murdered inside the septic tank of a madrasa in Sadar upazila on Monday.

The deceased was Aysha Akter, 23, daughter of late Shahjahan Sheikh of Poregola village in the upazila.

SM Ziaul Haque, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said Aysha went out of home after receiving a phone call on Friday night and since then she remained missing. However, the family members informed police about her missing.

On Monday night, bad odour came out from the septic tank of Bhora Dakhil Madrasa. On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body.

Police primarily suspect that criminals strangled the woman and dumped the body there.

Locals said Aysha fell in love with a man of Satkhira through Facebook and married him five years ago. But the relation did not last long. Last year, Aysha remarried a youth who was younger than her. There was a conflict over the marriage.

The victim's mother filed a case, accusing five people, said the OC.

Teacher held for misbehaviour with girls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A teacher of Falimari Government Primary School in Aditmari upazila was arrested on Monday on charge of unethical behaviour with female students of the school.

Earlier on the day, locals and guardians confined him to the school's office room. Police arrested the teacher.

The accused is Amir Hossain, 43, an assistant teacher of the school.

Headmaster Pulin Chandra Sarkar said the arrestee was warned several times in this regard but he did not care.

Contacted, Amir refuted the allegation.



This bamboo bridge was built voluntarily by villagers over a branch of the Teesta river at Taluk Belka village in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha.

PHOTO: STAR

A bamboo bridge with self-help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Local people voluntarily constructed a bamboo bridge across a branch of the Teesta river at Taluk Belka village in Sundarganj upazila, easing communication between several unions and Sundarganj upazila headquarters.

Thousands of people of Belka and Haripur unions and some parts of adjacent Ulipur and Chilmarri unions of Kurigram had to suffer a lot due to lack of communication on this route. During rainy season people crossed the river by ferry boats, but it was very difficult to cross it in the dry season.

Local people desperately needed a bridge across the river, but none came forward to mitigate their sufferings.

This year, some businessmen and social workers took a leading role to erect a bamboo bridge across the river. They collected funds and equipment for construction of

the bridge and started work early this month.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer SM Golam Kibria and Upazila Parishad Chairman Majedur Rahman also contributed from their own sources to gear up construction of the bridge, said Anwarul Islam, a local trader and social worker.

It took around Tk 1.5 lakh to build the 300-foot-long bridge with the help of local people, he said. Nobody refused to participate in this work, he added.

With the construction of the bridge, school going children can easily attend classes on time, which they could not earlier, said Ranga Sarker, another social worker.

Earlier, we could not ply rickshaws on this route, but now it has become easy to carry bulky goods and agricultural produce from one union to another, said Suroj Mia, a van puller of Belka bazar.

Girl dies as scarf gets entangled with easy-bike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A 12-year-old girl was killed as her scarf got entangled with the motor of a battery-run auto-rickshaw (easy-bike) in Islampur upazila yesterday.

Deceased Rozina, daughter of Mohor Uddin of village Munniarchar, was a Class IV of a local madrasa.

Rozina along with her maternal aunt Champa Begum boarded on the easy bike from the upazila town to reach Guthail Bazar around 12.00pm.

Minutes after it reached Denuar More, her scarf came to contact with the three wheelers' motor and was entangled with it, leaving her dead on the spot, said police.