



The sub-jail at Baliadangi village in Faridpur's Charbhadrasan remains unused for over two decades.

PHOTO: STAR

# Faridpur sub-jail unused for 28 yrs

SUZIT KUMAR DAS with ANDREW EAGLE

Around 28 years after its construction, the sub-jail in Baliadangi village of Faridpur's Charbhadrasan upazila has never been used. Built at a cost of Tk 1 crore and designed to house 25 inmates, rotting window frames and a main gate turned to rust mark the overgrown site. Two squatter families occupy what were supposed to be the staff quarters, while some of the 1.15-acre grounds have been grabbed by locals. The sub-jail is the sorry story of public investment wasted.

Officially inaugurated on 16 August 1990 by the then Minister of the Jute Industry, Sheikh Sohridul Islam, the sub-jail never opened due to political unrest at the time. At some point in the many intervening years its water tank and electrical fittings were stolen.

"We've been living here for some years," says Sorufa Akter, 20, from one of the two families occupying the staff quarters. "Our house was taken by the Padma River. We have no other land." Alongside the squat-

ters, the site also attracts various loiterers after dark.

"In the evenings some people of questionable character gather there," says the chairman of the local Charbhadrasan union council, Azad Khan. "For that reason I have been asking the authorities to use the site."

Charbhadrasan upazila's social welfare officer Oasim Akram, meanwhile, notes that the unused sub-jail was handed over to the Social Welfare Department in 2004, in the hope that an alternative use could be found. "We sent reports to our higher authorities twice, proposing to use the site as a safe house for children," he says, "but we are yet to get any response. We believe the squatters and land grabbers will leave willingly if the site is put to any social welfare use."

Sadly, Charbhadrasan sub-jail's neglect is the rule rather than the exception. Social welfare department documents show that of the 25 sub-jails built across the country in the years leading up to 1990, just two have been used for any purpose since building work was completed.

## Key Tangail roads in bad shape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Most of the roads in the town have remained in dilapidated condition for the last few months, causing sufferings to the commuters.

Offices of the deputy commissioner, superintendent of police, civil surgeon, judge court, judicial magistrate court, district council (zila parishad), district election office and regional passport office are situated in the area. The Zila Shishu Academy and Police Lines High School are also in the area.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw that the roads from District Gate to Police Lines, Police Lines to Shishu Academy, and Deputy Commissioner's office to Superintendent of Police's office, District Council (zila parishad) to Law Clerks Office and Advocate Bar Association to Helipad remained in bad state.

Numerous potholes have been created on most of the roads while water remains stagnant on these as there is no water drainage system, causing problems both

for the people and vehicles.

A large pothole was also seen on the road behind the SP office.

Rain water remains stagnant on the road north of the police superintendent's office near the Police Lines High School and on the road at the north of the Judicial Magistrate's Court building due to lack of proper drainage system.

Water remains stagnant in the potholes on the road from Helipad area to the Police Lines in slight rain, creating problems in moving on the road with vehicles, said auto rickshaw driver Rafiqul Islam.

Minor accidents often happen on the damaged roads almost every day, said Sayid Miah, a tea stall owner in the area.

The roads turn almost impossible for movement of vehicles after heavy rain, said Saiful Islam in nearby Madrasa Intersection area.

Muhammad Nesar Uddin Jewel, additional deputy commissioner (general) in Tangail, said they have already informed Public Works Department about the matter and they have assured them of repairing the roads soon.



Vehicles ply a dilapidated road stretching from District Gate to Police Lines in Tangail town.

PHOTO: STAR

## Police source stabbed dead, another man found killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A police 'informant' was stabbed to death by a snatcher at CNG stand at Comilla Central Eidgah road early yesterday.

Comilla Kotwali Model Police Station Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Apolo said police heard screams from the CNG stand and they found that a man had been stabbed. They arrested the attacker, he said.

He said the injured man died on the way to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

The deceased was Billal Hossain, 30, son of Siddikur Rahman of Jamtala in Comilla Sadar. Police said he was a goldsmith.

Billal's wife Hamida Begum said Billal was an informant of Kotwali police and used to work with ASI Apolo.

The arrestee is Hridoy Ahmed, 20, son of Mehedi Hasan of Kaptanbazar in the district. Police seized a bloodstained knife and a mobile phone from him.

Meanwhile, a throat-slit body was recovered at Kerani Bari Road in Dumuria Chandpur of the district.

Locals saw the body on the road yesterday. Identity of the deceased could not be known, but locals said he could be a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver.

Kotwali Model Police Station Officer in Charge Abu Salam Mia said the body was sent to Comilla Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

## HOME FOR THE POOR ON NEW CHAR

# Sundarbans likely to face ecological crisis



Earth filling is being carried out for a special Ashrayan project on a newly emerged char in the Bhola river at Sharankhola range of East Sundarbans division of Bagerhat. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The government is implementing a special Ashrayan project on a newly-emerged char (land emerged from the the Bhola river) at Sharankhola range of the East Sundarbans division of Bagerhat.

Although the Bhola river falls under the Sharankhola range of the Sundarbans, the district administration of Bagerhat started development work of the Ashrayan (shelter for the poor) project in March.

The local administration of Sharankhola started earth filling to build the special Ashrayan Project-2 on five acres of the char, said Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Mahmudul Hasan of Sundarbans East Division.

The forest department sent a letter to the deputy commissioner (DC) of Bagerhat on April 26, requesting him to stop the project on the land, but

they did not pay any heed, he said.

"We also sent a letter to the Ministry of Environment and Forests on April 3, informing them about the matter. The High Court has given directives to the DC to stop the work of the project, but those were ignored. Work of the project is going on. If it does not stop, the mangrove forest will face an ecological crisis," he added.

"The natural resources and biodiversity of the Sundarbans will be threatened by the settlement of homeless people on the char of the Sundarbans. They will become dependent on the reserve forest for livelihood, which might destroy the forest and its resources," the DFO said.

They have written to the ministry about the issue, but the development work has not stopped, he added.

In 2005, three projects of Sonatola-1, 2, 3 in Sharankhola were post-

poned for protecting the biodiversity of the Sundarbans, he said, adding that the work of a project in Daser Varani area in Dakkhin Rajapur village under Sharankhola upazila was cancelled in 2013.

Nur Alam Sheikh, Bagerhat coordinator of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), said the wrong decision of the administration will harm the Sundarbans, adding that Bapa protests the decision.

Emdadul Haq, assistant director of the District's Department of Environment, said Ashrayan project has not taken any permission from the department. They have come to know that the High Court has given directives to stop the work, he said.

Sharankhola Upazila Nirbahi Officer Lincoln Biswas said the district has jurisdiction over a new char "I did not get any direction from the court in this regard," he added.

## Broker-free Benapole check post

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

International customs and police have freed Benapole check post from brokers 47 years after the liberation of the country.

Security has been beefed up at Customs and Immigration office to stop harassment of passport holder passengers travelling to and from India from Wednesday.

Benapole Customs Commissioner Belal Hossain Chowdhury said ultra modern scanners have been set up at the passenger terminal and security strengthened.

A total of 11,31,850 passport passengers travelled between Bangladesh and India through international check post in fiscal year 2017-18. Tk 56.59 crore revenue was realised from these passengers.

CC cameras, passengers' rest houses and air conditioning system have been installed in the customs and immigration area.

Port security guards, Ansar members and customs officers' round the clock vigilance have been increased at the main gate of the terminal to prevent entry of passport brokers. The number of India-bound passengers through the check post has also increased. At pres-

ent, every day about 3000 to 4000 passengers go to India through Benapole.

Benapole Customs sources said a section of brokers had been harassing the passport passengers coming from far-flung areas of the country for long.

Miking has been done every day so that no outsider can enter the terminal areas. The passengers are being cautioned not to give their passports to any broker.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Benapole check post police immigration Tariqul Islam said passengers stand in a queue to ensure their movement to and from India hassle-free.

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The duration of the service contract is one year initially, subject to renewal upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/operations/jobs.html>. Applications should be received no later than 15 August 2018.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.

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