



Labourers dump sandbags on an erosion-hit approach road to a culvert at Rudreshwar village in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila to protect it from erosion by the Teesta river.

PHOTO:
S DILIP ROY

5 bridges, culverts at risk of collapse

The structures in Lalmonirhat become vulnerable due to strong current in Teesta

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Two bridges and three culverts on Kakina-Mahipur road in Kaliganj upazila have turned too risky and may collapse anytime due to strong current in the Teesta river.

The 5.5-kilometre road connects four upazilas of Lalmonirhat with Rangpur city through the newly constructed Sheikh Hasina Bridge over the Teesta river at Mahipur in Rangpur's Gangachara upazila.

Officials at Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) in Kaliganj upazila said the two bridges and

three large culverts were constructed at a cost of Tk 16 crore about five years ago.

Lalmonirhat LGED Executive Engineer SM Zakiur Rahman said the bridges and culverts were constructed on 10-metre to 20-metre-wide canals, following proper designs.

"Due to collapse of an embankment upstream and strong current in the Teesta river this year, the 20-metre canal now has turned into a 500-metre channel," he said.

Azizul Islam, 62, of Rudreshwar village in Kaliganj upazila, said due to strong current in Teesta a portion of the approach

road to one of the bridges collapsed on September 14, just two days before the inauguration of the newly constructed Sheikh Hasina Teesta Bridge.

"Communications through the bridge remained suspended for two days till the collapsed portion was temporarily repaired on September 16," he said.

"Now all the approach roads connecting the five bridges and culverts are in vulnerable conditions and may collapse anytime due to the strong current of the Teesta," said another local Nazrul Islam, 55.

Kaliganj upazila LGED Engineer Parvez

Newaz Khan said they have dumped sand bags at several vulnerable points of the approach roads to save the bridges and culverts from collapsing.

It's not possible to save the roads, bridges and culverts from collapsing if no dyke is built to protect the Teesta river embankment soon, he said.

A project has been taken to build a dyke upstream of the newly constructed Sheikh Hasina Bridge to save the Teesta river embankment, Rangpur WDB Executive Engineer Mehedy Hasan said, adding that the work would start in the upcoming dry season.

Grocer abducted in Cox's Bazar

The criminals demand Tk 5 lakh as ransom from victim's father

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Armed miscreants yesterday kidnapped a grocer from Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila for Tk 5 lakh ransom.

The victim is Mohammad Tarek, 26, son of Kabir Ahmed of Bhaditola area in the upazila, said police and locals.

Kabir said his son Tarek closed his shop at Eidgaon bus station and was going to his house like other days. When Tarek reached Zafar's Rice Mill, 10 to 12 armed miscreants took him hostage at gunpoint and left for deep jungle.

The kidnappers then demanded Tk 5 lakh ransom from Kabir for his son's release over mobile phone. Eidgaon Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Syed Alam, Ziaul Haque, a member of ward No 7 under the UP, and other elites of the area held a meeting to find a way to rescue Tarek.

Sub-inspector Shahad Uddin of Eidgaon Police Investigation Centre said they are raiding different areas to rescue Tarek.

Relatives of Tarek have expressed their apprehension after the abduction. Local people are also concerned over the matter.

Locals alleged that a robber gang, led by Anwar Hossain alias Anaiya of Baishari union in Naikkhongchhari upazila, was directly involved with the abduction. Several incidents of abduction took place in the area earlier.

BGB hands over Indian's body

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday handed over the body of an Indian citizen to Border Security Force (BSF).

The deceased was Motiur Rahman, 35, son of Mohammad Johak of Camppara-Paodenapur village under Boishnabnagar Police Station in Murshidabad of West Bengal.

A BGB patrol team found bullet-hit body of Motiur Rahman in Masudpur border area, around 400 yards inside Bangladesh territory on September 20, said Lt Col Sajjad Sarwar, commanding officer of BGB-53 Battalion in Chapainawabganj.

Later, he was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he died early yesterday.

After a flag meeting between BGB of Shingnagar camp and BSF of Doulatpur camp, the body was handed over to BSF.

35 injured as AL factions clash in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

At least 35 people, including five policemen, were injured and 14 houses damaged as two factions of Awami League (AL) clashed on Monday over a school managing committee election in Saltha upazila.

Kagdi High School managing committee election in Majhardia union will be held on October 7.

Upazila AL Joint Secretary Md Giasuddin and former union parishad chairman, also Majhardia union AL president, Afsaruddin, submitted nomination papers for five candidates each to the present management committee.

The two groups locked in an altercation on Monday when Giasuddin's candidates went to seek votes at Sojonkanda village. Police brought the situation under control.

As a sequel, the two groups clashed with lethal weapons at Kagdi village around 4:00pm the same day.

The three-hour clash left 35 people injured, including five policemen, and 14 houses were damaged and looted.

The injured were taken to Nagarkanda Upazila Health Complex and Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

"The supporters of Afsaruddin attacked my supporters when they went to seek votes at Sojonkanda village and vandalised shops and houses of my supporters," Giasuddin said.

"The supporters of Giasuddin beat up my supporters and both the groups locked in a clash," Afsaruddin said.

"Police rushed to the spot and fired 125 rounds of rubber bullets and 51 teargas shells to bring the situation under control and detained 16 people in this connection. Five policemen were also injured in this incident," said Saltha Police Station OC Delwar Hossain.

Sub-Inspector Ashutosh Kumar Biswas filed a case against 200 people with the police station, the OC said.

The arrestees were produced before a court that sent them to jail yesterday, he added.

Schoolboy drowns in Rajbari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A schoolboy drowned in a pond in Sojanakanda area of Rajbari Sadar upazila yesterday.

The victim was Abdur Rahman, 17, son of Abdur Rob of Sajankanda village. He was a Class IX student of Rajbari Government High School.

Family members said Abdur Rahman went to take bath in a pond beside their house with his friends and drowned.

Later, the friend rescued Rahman and rushed him to Rajbari General Hospital where on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Jhum farmers busy in harvesting paddy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Indigenous farmers in the hill district are busy in harvesting paddy as well as making items needed for cultivating jhum.

Jhum is a kind of cultivation method of the indigenous people of Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT). The method is used in the hills. Jhum cultivation is not profitable now due to climate change and reduced soil fertility, but many indigenous families still depend on jhum and maintain their tradition.

This correspondent visited Gachban village in Perachara union of Sadar upazila. Many families of this village earn their livelihood by jhum cultivation. Sunil Tripura said he and his wife started harvesting paddy four days ago and the yield is good this year.

Sathoi Marma of Krishi Gabeshana area said he does not cultivate jhum but makes items necessary for harvesting jhum crops. He has been making kallong (local name of a basket) for the last three or four weeks used in harvesting and cultivating jhum, he said. He sells four to five kallongs a week in Khagrachhari Bazar, he added.

Dhoniram Tripura of Nunchari



Farmers with kallongs on their backs harvesting jhum paddy at Gachban village in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila. The photo was taken last Wednesday.

area said he sells toloi (local name for a kind of mat) in Khagrachhari Bazar. He said one cannot dry jhum paddy without toloi. Now those

days are over as jhum farmers are using plastic mats instead of toloi, he said, adding that it takes four to five days to make a toloi.



Mursheda with her parents at their Pashchim Brahmanpara village home in Melandah upazila of Jamalpur.

PHOTO:
STAR

Happy reunion after 11 years

Missing with bipolar disorder over a decade ago, Mursheda returns to parents from West Bengal

ABM AMINUL ISLAM, Jamalpur

It was an amazingly happy occasion as 41-year-old Mursheda, who remained traceless for long ten years till her identification at a mental hospital in West Bengal of India in May last year, returned to her elderly parents in Melandah upazila under the district on Friday.

Mursheda, daughter of poor parents Nomej Uddin Nonda, 86, and Sahara Begum, 76, of Pashchim Brahmanpara village under Melandah upazila, went missing at the age of 30 when she was suffering from bipolar disorder.

"After failed search in Jamalpur and Dhaka for years, I came to know in early May last year that my daughter was at Bahrampur Mental Hospital in Murshidabad of West Bengal," said Sahara.

"I cannot say how happy I am to get back my daughter after long 11 years," said the mother while the father, suffering from senility, beamed with happiness as this correspondent visited their house.

"At the age of 15, Mursheda was married to neighbour Haibar Sheikh. But he and his family members often tortured her mentally and physically. Meantime, she became mother of two daughters and a son. At the age 28, she developed mental problem. Two years later, her husband divorced her," said Sahara.

Recalling the incident, Mursheda said, "Afterwards, seeing Haibar along with my three children leaving the village for Dhaka to settle there, I alone followed him and met him in Jamalpur town as the last attempt to reconcile considering the future of my children. But he did not respond."

"I lost control over myself and got into a train from Jamalpur station. Since then I remained detached from my parents," she narrated.

"Seeing Mursheda roaming in a street of Burdwan of West Bengal in early 2013, police arranged her admission to Bahrampur Mental Hospital in Murshidabad. Her mental condition developed to a satisfactory level in two years," said

Prashanta Chowdhury, superintendent of the hospital.

With three years' additional mental therapy like music, dance, yoga, stitching work and counselling provided by Anjali, a non-government mental health care organisation, Mursheda was able to socialise, said Swatilekha Dhar Gupta, a music therapist of Anjali.

Ratna Boli Ray, director of Anjali, started working for her return after this correspondent identified her parents and sent necessary documents for the purpose to them in September last year.

After a long repatriation process done by the higher authorities concerned of the two countries, Mursheda was handed over to Border Guard Bangladesh at Benapole Immigration Check Post on September 13.

After staying at a shelter home run by Ahsania Mission in Jessore for a week, Mursheda finally returned to her parents.

"I will have to survive for my elderly parents," said a promising Mursheda.