



A scene of erosion by the Meghna river in Hatiya upazila of Noakhali.

PHOTO: NURUL AMIN

## Teacher behind bars for stalking

Students, guardians give him good beating

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A mobile court here yesterday sentenced a schoolteacher to imprisonment for one year for stalking a girl student of his institution.

The convict, Saidur Rahman, 45, an assistant teacher of Bindubasini Government Girls' High School in the town, is son of Abdul Mannan of Kalihati upazila.

Tangail Executive Magistrate Sharier Rahman passed the order after the allegation brought against Saidur was found to be true.

Saidur, who had been stalking his female students for long, gave an illicit proposal to a Class IX student of the institution on Sunday.

Being annoyed, several students of the class lodged a verbal complaint in this regard to the school headmaster, who instead of taking any action against Saidur, took undertaking from the complainants, threatening to rusticate them from his school, students alleged.

Hearing the matter, a group of angry students and their guardians confined Saidur to the school premises yesterday morning and gave him a good beating, locals said.

Later, Tangail Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and ICT) Ashraful Momin Khan, Additional Superintendent of Police Shariful Islam along with other policemen rushed to the school and took the accused teacher under their custody, Officer-in-Charge of Sadar Model Police Station Saidur Rahman said.

Meanwhile, a number of guardians demanded immediate removal of the headmaster for not taking any steps against teacher Saidur despite getting complaints on several occasions. They also demanded appointment of a female headmaster at the institution.

Headmaster Mamun Talukder, however, refuted the allegation of taking any undertaking from his students.

## Five JMB men on two-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A Natore court yesterday placed five suspected members of banned militant outfit Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) on a two-day remand.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Mamunur Rashid gave the order when the five were produced before his court, seeking a five-day remand.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested the JMB members from Boraigram upazila on Sunday.

The arrestees are Jubayer Hossain, 35, son of late Azimuddin of Dogasi village, Mostafizur Rahman alias Farhad, 36, son of Moksed Ali, Ashraful Islam, 32, son of Makbul Hossain of Dogasi village, Mohammad Alauddin alias Abbas, 38, son of Belal Hossain of Gonaithi village and Mohammad Zakaria, 23, son of Razab Ali Sarker of Borni village in the upazila.

ASP Azmal Hossain, company commander of Natore unit Rab, said Jubayer Hossain is regional chief of JMB.

The elite force also seized seven books on jihad and three leaflets from the arrestees, he said.

# Meghna wreaks havoc in Hatiya

Vast croplands, houses, schools, cyclone shelters, sluice gates and embankments gone into the river, more areas face threat

NURUL AMIN, Noakhali

Vast areas of Boyarchar, Nolerchar and Karingchar in Hatiya upazila under the district are being devoured by the Meghna river.

Hundreds of acres of cropland, many dwelling houses, educational institutions, mosques, roads, bazars, cyclone shelters, sluice gates and 14 kilometres of embankments in the island upazila have gone into the riverbed during the last couple of years, said sources at Water Development Board's (WDB) Noakhali office.

Two sluice gates, several cyclone shelters, vast croplands and a number

of dwelling houses in Boyarchar, Nolerchar and Karingchar areas are facing erosion, they said.

Boats are the main mode of transport for the residents of Hatiya upazila.

After losing croplands and dwelling house to the Meghna, several hundred families left the area. Many of them have taken shelter in the cyclone shelters, which are also under erosion threat.

"Our house at Hatiya Nolchhira Ghat was devoured by the Meghna two years ago. Later my son, who is a day labourer, erected a house on a government khas land at Nolerchar on the bank of the Meghna. Now this is also under threat of

erosion," said Noor Banu, an elderly widow at Nolerchar.

Afzal Majhi earlier lived with his children in Sluice Gate area of Karingchar. After losing his house to the Meghna, he is now living at a cyclone shelter in the area in a miserable condition.

"The cyclone shelter centre-cum-primary school at Teker Bazar went into the Meghna early this month. We are worried about the education of our children as there is no school nearby," said Abdur Rahman of Noler Char.

Locals have urged the government to take urgent measures to prevent erosion for saving the lives and properties of those who

are still living in the char areas.

Executive Engineer of WDB, Noakhali, Mohammad Nasir Uddin said he has sent a proposal to the ministry concerned, seeking allocation of Tk 228-crore for a sustainable measure to prevent erosion at Boyarchar, Nolerchar and Karingchar in Hatiya.

"Besides, a Tk 50-crore priority project proposal has been submitted to the Ministry of Water Resources for saving a sluice gate and different structures. If allocation is made, preventive measures against erosion including building of embankments will be taken," he said.

## THREAT BY LAND GRABBERS IN NILPHAMARI

# Lower caste Hindus decide not to celebrate Durga Puja

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Underprivileged scheduled caste people belonging to Hindu community at Berakuti Barua village under Sonarai union of Nilphamari Sadar upazila have decided not to celebrate the upcoming Durga Puja amid threat from land grabbers.

"Dilip Chandra, 35, of our village and his associate Md Potoluddin instigated by land grabber Md Moddin, occupied 14 decimals of puja mandop land out of 21 decimals and build houses there a few months ago. Falsely claiming that the entire area belongs to them, he told us to shift the mandop or suffer dire consequences," said Nitya Rishi, president of local puja celebration committee.

"Our mandop is situated on a government's khas land and we've filed petition to the Sadar upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) for allocation of the property for the mandop," he said.

Sujon Baishya, secretary of the puja committee, said land grabbers

recently filed false cases with the court against hired sculptors and some puja committee members, compelling the sculptors to flee, leaving earthen statues of gods and goddesses incomplete.

"In this situation we've decided not to celebrate Durga Puja scheduled to

**Land grabbers force sculptors to leave statues incomplete at Nilphamari village.**

start on October 15," he said.

Babu Ashwini Kumar, former chairman of Sonarai Union Parishad, said land grabber Dilip Chandra is accused in several cases including those for drug trade and oppression on women and children.

"Seeking safety for the sculptures as well as local Hindus and steps to free

the mandop land from grabbers, we filed a petition to the Sadar UNO last week," said Ananda Hazara, a scheduled caste Hindu.

The UNO directed the union's assistant land officer to investigate the matter and the latter after investigation ordered the occupants to vacate the land within three days but it was ignored," he said.

Asked about the allegations, Dilip Chandra said, "The real owner of the land was late Purno Chadnahata. He donated the land to my grandfather Satish Chandra after the partition of 1947 and then migrated to India."

But Dilip could not show any document in favour of his claim.

Sadar UNO Md Mamun Bhuyan said, "We've taken all out measures to ensure safety of the sculptures and devotees so that they can celebrate the religious festival peacefully. After the puja, we'll take step to allocate the 21-decimal land in favour of the mandop committee."



Scheduled caste Hindus give a gloomy look in front of their puja mandop at Berakuti Barua village in Sonarai union of Nilphamari Sadar upazila as land grabbers threatened them to shift the mandop and forced sculptors to leave the statues incomplete ahead of the Durga Puja scheduled to start on October 15.

PHOTO: STAR



People of five villages in Rangamati municipality are suffering a lot as they have to cross this badly damaged wooden bridge in Uluchara village to go to their destinations.

PHOTO: STAR

# Broken wooden bridge only means

Villagers suffering for many years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

More than three hundred families of five villages in Sadar upazila under the municipality are suffering a lot as the only wooden bridge at Uluchara is badly damaged.

The people of Uluchara, Katchari, Alutila, Notun Para and Bidya Nagar villages use the bridge to go to their destinations for daily work.

On a visit to the spot a couple of days ago, this correspondent saw about 150 people of the five villages repairing the bridge.

The villagers said they have been working for nearly one week to temporarily repair the 320-foot-long and 20-foot-wide bridge with wood and bamboo.

Robi Dhan Chakma, karbari (chief of village), said they are repairing the bridge

without waiting for any government aid because of the suffering of the villagers.

"Rangamati Hill District Council built the bridge in the 2015-16 fiscal year, but they did not repair it when it was damaged due to the heavy rainfall and landslide last year. So we decided to repair it on our own," he added.

Binodini Chakma, 45, of Katchari said the children go to school about two kilometres from their village using the bridge, and they are suffering a lot as it is broken.

Romel Chakma, a Class VI student of Moanohar Residential School, said some students were injured while crossing the bridge.

Mayor Akbar Hossain Chowdhury said the zila parishad has allocated funds and work to build a concrete bridge will begin soon.

## Trucker, helper murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A driver and his helper were found murdered in a truck in Mulibari area near the Bangabandhu Bridge in Sirajganj yesterday.

The victims were Md Al Amin, driver of the truck, and his helper Md Sohel.

Sub-inspector of Bangabandhu Bridge West Zone Police Station Md Johurul Islam said bad smell was coming from the truck stranded in the area for the last two days.

Police sent the bodies to Sirajganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy. They might have been strangled, said the SI.

The Dhaka-bound corn-laden truck from Lalmonirhat was parked in the area on Saturday.