



PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

This concrete bridge along with a portion of the bridge approach road collapsed in June this year due to illegal lifting of sand from a canal flowing along a tea garden in Habiganj's Chunarughat upazila. Inset, mindless sand lifting has eroded 40 such houses at Chaklapunjee Tea Garden.

## CHT LAND COMMISSION 4TH MEET Slow progress in land settlement

*Alleges Santu Larma*  
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Land Commission held its meeting, fourth of its kind after the appointment of Chairman Anwar-ul Haque, at Rangamati Circuit House in the district town yesterday.

Its first meeting was held on August 4 in 2016.

"Today's meeting discussed the ways to speed up the Commission's work. It sees slow progress as the Commission has shortage of manpower and the government is yet to make rules of business," said Santu Larma chairman of CHT Regional Council.

"Twenty-two applications have been submitted from three hill districts. We will start hearing on the objections about land ownership soon if the government makes rules of business for the land commission," the chairman said after the meeting that continued from 11:00am to 1:30pm.

He said the Commission has decided to open two branch offices in Rangamati and Bandarban.

Debashish Roy, Chakma circle chief, said, "Most of the families are yet to get settlement for their lost land. I hope that the Commission will work for solving the problem."

Anwar-ul Haque was appointed the chairman of CHT Land Commission for the second term on December 11 last year, after expiry of his three-year contact at the same position.

## Projonmo League man held with Yaba

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-13) detained two people, including a leader of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Projonmo League, a pro-Awami League organisation, and seized 51 Yaba tablets in Sadullapur upazila on Monday night.

The arrestees are Ahsan Habib Naheed, 30, president of Muktiyoddha Projonmo League's Sadullapur upazila unit, also joint secretary of the district unit, and Abdul Ahad, 30, of Bhabanipur village in the upazila.

Meanwhile, police produced the two before a court here yesterday and the court sent them to jail, said Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Sadullapur Police Station Borhan Uddin.

A team of Rab-13, acting on a tip-off, raided Naheed's house in Pashchimpara area on Monday night and arrested him with 51 Yaba tablets, OC Borhan said, adding that the law enforcers also detained Ahad while he was returning from Naheed's house after collecting 14 Yaba pills from there.

"Naheed had been running Yaba business in the area for long but we could not arrest him red-handed as he has put his entire house under CCTV surveillance," the OC added.



Ahsan Habib Naheed

# IMPACT OF ILLEGAL SAND LIFTING IN HABIGANJ Bridge collapses, 40 houses eroded

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Mindless lifting of sand from a canal flowing along a tea garden in Habiganj's Chunarughat upazila has led to the collapse of a bridge and eroded at least 40 houses, affecting hundreds of families in the area.

Besides, several more houses at Chaklapunjee Tea Garden are also on the verge of collapse anytime, locals said.

Hundreds of workers of the tea garden have been suffering a lot as the authorities concerned are yet to repair the collapsed concrete bridge.

During a visit to the area this correspondent saw local people, especially school

going children, crossing the broken bridge amid risk of accident.

Mithun Urang, a resident of Chaklapunjee Tea Garden, said the approach road connecting the bridge over a canal on Chunarughat-Madhappur road collapsed in June this year as a result of illegal sand lifting and incessant rainfall.

Road communication between Chunarughat and Madhappur upazilas through the tea garden route remained suspended due to the bridge collapse, he said.

People's suffering mounts when rainwater covers the potholes as vehicular movement on the road remains suspended for quite some time.

Seventy-year-old Lakhi Rajbongshi of

Chaklapunjee area said illegal sand lifting has destroyed most of the houses of the garden.

"If our house is eroded, where will we go?" he asked.

Tea labourer's leader Swapan Santal said although two female workers of the garden died after being stuck in the sand due to the mindless sand lifting, the authorities concerned have turned a blind eye to their woes.

Babul Santal, president of Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union, Chaklapunjee unit, said over 40 houses have already been destroyed while the rest are also at risk due to the sand lifting.

Shubhankar Chandra Nag, manager of the tea garden, said they have already relo-

cated some affected workers to another place and while process to relocate the rest workers is underway.

Local people alleged that Jitu Mia, a local influential amn, is involved with the illegal sand lifting business for long.

Refuting the allegation, Jitu said a section of people in the area are trying to destroy his goodwill.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon's (Bapa), Habiganj unit General Secretary Tofazzal Sohel said about 40 houses were eroded due to the unabated illegal sand lifting by some local influential people.

Habiganj Additional Deputy Commissioner Nazmul Zahid Pavel said they will take immediate action against the culprits for lifting sand illegally.

## Man kills wife for dowry in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A woman was killed allegedly by her husband for dowry at Jhapa Village in Jashore's Monirampur upazila yesterday.

The deceased was Monju Khatun, 30, daughter of Jomshed Morol of Baga Dengi village in the upazila.

Quoting family members, police said Babul Hossain, 45, son of Raj Ali of Jhapa village, often tortured Monju for dowry.

Yesterday morning, Babul asked his wife to take Tk 30,000 from her father.

At one stage of altercation over the issue, Babul strangled Monju.

The reason behind the death will be known after getting the autopsy report, said Shakhawat Hossain, sub-inspector of Jhapa police outpost.

## Off-season spinach Bachchu draws attention of the people in Faridpur Sadar upazila cultivating the vegetable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

An innovative farmer of Beelmahamudpur village under Sadar upazila has drawn the attention of people from different areas as he has successfully cultivated palang shak (spinach) in the off-season.

Bachchu Mollah, 38, son of Saizuddin Mollah, said he cultivated summer palang shak on two decimals of land on experimental basis last year, adding that production cost was Tk 5,000 and he earned Tk 12,000.

"I cultivated summer palang shak on 12 decimals of land this year also. The total cultivation cost was Tk 30,000 and I started to sell the vegetable within 18 days of planting. I sold it at Tk 100 to Tk 120 per kilogram and hope to get Tk 90,000 more this year," Bachchu added.

"I am a wholesaler of cosmetics. I became interested in agriculture with encourage-

ment from my uncle, who got training from the Philippines. I started cultivating summer tomatoes on my 12 decimals of land five years ago. Later, I also got training from government and non-governmental institutions," he said.

"Bachchu is always interested in innovative agricultural work. He has been cultivating summer tomatoes for five years, but his off-season palang shak cultivation is really a unique agricultural work," said Sadar Upazila Agriculture Officer Md Abul Bashar Mia.

"I have visited Bachchu's palang shak field. He has done innovative agricultural work and he is the first man who has done it in summer season in our district," said Faridpur Department of Agricultural Extension Deputy Director Kartik Chadra Chakraborty.



Labourers working in Bachchu's off-season spinach field in Beelmahamudpur village under Sadar upazila of Faridpur.

PHOTO: STAR



Labourers carry heavy sacks of rice and wheat over the jetty at the Amtali food office in Barguna amid risk.

PHOTO: STAR

## Food godown jetty risky

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The jetty of Amtali upazila food office in Barguna has become unfit for use as it has not been repaired since 2007.

Labourers have been loading and unloading vessels using the badly damaged jetty for at least 11 years. An accident might take place anytime if the authorities do not take steps to repair the jetty.

Amtali Upazila Food Officer Robindra Nath Biswas said a wooden jetty was set up on a steel structure on the bank of Payra river in 2003 to load and unload rice and wheat for the upazila food godown. But since then, the jetty was not repaired and has become unfit for use, he added.

In 2007, the jetty was badly damaged by cyclone Sidr and its wooden planks have fallen down. Labourers have to place extra planks on the steel structure to load and unload goods.

They have to carry sacks of rice or wheat, weighing 50 kg to 100 kg each, over the jetty at the risk of their lives.

Md Nizam Uddin, labour sardar (head) of the food godown, said the jetty became unfit for use as it has not been repaired after it was damaged by Sidr.

They have to carry heavy sacks at the risk of their lives and authorities should take immediate steps to repair the jetty considering their interest, labourers said.

"We informed the higher authorities about the matter several times, asking them to take steps to repair the jetty," the upazila food officer said.

Barguna District Food Controller (DC food) Md Shahidul Islam said they requested the higher authorities to take steps to repair the jetty.

"We will take immediate steps to repair it after discussing with the higher authorities," he added.

## No response

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electronic media in India and Pakistan have speculated that Islamabad was considering expulsion of the Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Tarik Ahsan following Dhaka's refusal to accept the nomination.

The Daily Times of Pakistan yesterday carried a report with the headline "Islamabad likely to expel Bangladeshi high commissioner" and said that Islamabad was considering expulsion of the Bangladesh high commissioner.

Quoting diplomatic sources, the newspaper reported that the foreign ministry in Islamabad had informed Prime Minister Imran Khan about the diplomatic row between the two countries and had recommended the expulsion.

When contacted, a top ranking official at Bangladesh's foreign ministry last night told The Daily Star that he was not aware of any such development.

Diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan have soured since the beginning of the trial and execution of war criminals in Bangladesh.

Despite Dhaka's repeated calls to Pakistan to not interfere in the internal matters of Bangladesh, Pakistan's national and provincial parliaments adopted a resolution against the trial of war criminals.