

Townpeople suffer as rly overbridge broken

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The railway foot overbridge has remained broken for long in Rajbari, causing immense suffering to townspeople.

According to a Rajbari Railway Station official, the cross bars of gate no1 remains down while a train passes. At least six passenger trains and two freight trains cross the rail gate every day. Besides, this line is used for changing engine of trains. Due to this, the passersby must use the overbridge.

On a recent visit to the railway gate, this correspondent found that the foot overbridge is only 100 metres from Rajbari Railway Station. Several concrete stairs on the southern part of the bridge are broken.

Some fruit traders occupied the northern part of the bridge to sell their fruits. So, people cannot use the foot overbridge easily.

Shafik Hossain, 34, of Notunbazar area of the town, said "Right leg of my friend was fractured a few days ago when we were crossing the railway line using the overbridge while a freight train was passing. It was unknown to us that the stairs of the bridge are broken."

Shariful Islam, a student of Rajbari Government College, said "We need to use the bridge every day to go to and come from our college. We are afraid as some stairs have remained broken for long."

Due to this, they have to wait for long at the rail gate when trains, especially freight trains, cross it. It becomes very boring.

Md Hasan Ali, senior sub-assistant engineer (bridge) of Rajbari Railway Office, said they have already informed the higher authorities about the matter. He hopes that the problem will be resolved soon.

Man killed, 20 injured over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A man was killed in a clash over land dispute between two groups of villagers in Gobindapur village under Juri upazila yesterday.

The deceased was Taher Ali, 50, of Kalinagar village in Joyfornagar union of the upazila.

Members of both the groups fought each other using local weapons when they went to plant paddy seeds on the land.

More than 20 people were injured in the incident. They were taken to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital and Juri Upazila Health Complex.

Police said there was a longstanding dispute over a piece of land between Taher Ali of Joyfornagar village and Chan Mia of Gobindapur village.

Juri Police Station Officer-in-Charge Zahangir Hossain confirmed the incident and said police brought the situation under control.

Additional police forces have been deployed in the area to avert any unwanted incident.



A dredger extracts stone from the Dharla river at Banglabari in Jagatbar union in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Stone lifting spree in Dharla river

The illegal act poses threat of erosion in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

A syndicate of influential people allegedly started lifting stone illegally from the Dharla river at four villages in Patgram upazila in the last week of November, threatening erosion by the river and damaging village roads by transporting stones on trucks.

Around 50 dredgers are lifting stone round the clock, locals said.

Locals are the worst sufferers of the stone lifting, but they do not dare protest against it as musclemen of the area are involved in the malpractice.

Abdul Quader, 48, of Banglabari village, alleged that some musclemen have been lifting stones round the clock. "We cannot sleep peacefully at night due to the very loud sounds from the dredgers," he said.

Shanti Akhter, 50, of the village said they cannot tolerate this malpractice as it is harmful for them. "If we dare to protest illegal stone

lifting, we will have to face unnecessary harassment," she said, adding that their croplands and homesteads are under threat of erosion.

"We are not getting any help from the administration or the police to stop illegal stone lifting, as they are allegedly 'managed' by the syndicate," said Mahbubur Rahman, 42, of Kafirbazar village. "Living in the river embankment area has become risky," he added.

Saheb Ali, 56, of Burimari village, said illegal stone lifting was stopped for one and a half years as local administration, police and political leaders jointly took strong steps, but the syndicate is back to the activity again, he said, adding that almost all the syndicate members are involved in politics.

Dredger owner Azizar Rahman said he gets Tk 5,000 as rent for each machine, except fuel cost. "We can lift around 3,000sft to 3,500sft of stones by each machine every day," he said, adding that

the syndicate members deal with the total matter of lifting and selling stones.

Syndicate member Rashedul Islam Pakhi of Banglabari village said he and nine others are involved in lifting stones, and he alone controls six dredgers.

Patgram Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sajjad Hossain said the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) will conduct drives and police will assist him during the drive. "I do not enjoy benefit from illegal stone lifting and I am not managed by the syndicate," he added.

Patgram Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdul Karim said he is not aware about illegal stone lifting, and he will conduct drives if he gets any complaint. "There is no possibility of managing me for illegal stone lifting," he added.

Deputy Commissioner Shafiu Arif told this correspondent that he has heard about illegal stone lifting and has asked the UNO to take legal action against the syndicate members.

Terror probe

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The witness said he heard the "most blood-curdling scream" and looked down the platform to see the attack unfolding.

"He came towards me," he added. "I looked down and saw he had a kitchen knife with a black handle with a good 12 inch (30-centimetre) blade."

"It was just fear, pure fear."

Clack said police officers used a stun gun and pepper spray before "six or seven" officers jumped on the man.

Video footage of the incident shows the male suspect being overpowered by the officers.

Manchester police said he was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder.

The woman suffered injuries to her face and abdomen and the man was wounded in the abdomen, while a British Transport Police officer sustained a stab wound to the shoulder.

Their injuries were described as serious but not life-threatening.

'DREADFUL'

The city's New Year celebrations went ahead in Albert Square despite the incident, with a firework display taking place as planned, though increased security was brought in.

The city experienced a suicide attack in May 2017, when 22 people were killed and 139 wounded at a concert by the US singer Ariana Grande at the Manchester Arena.

The bomber, Salman Abedi, 22, was born and raised in Manchester.

"I know that the events of last night will have affected many people and caused concern," Hopkins said yesterday.

"That the incident happened so close to the scene of the terrorist attack on May 22, 2017 makes it even more dreadful.

"Our work will continue to ensure we get to the full facts of what happened and why it took place."



PHOTO: STAR

Police seize a book containing a hundred ballot papers from a pipe meant for irrigation at a paddy field in Brahmanbaria yesterday. Inset, officials check the ballot papers, 28 of them sealed with 'sheaf of paddy' symbol, following the recovery.

Ballot paper book found in paddy field

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Police recovered a book of ballot papers sealed with 'sheaf of paddy' symbol from inside a pipe of an irrigation tube-well in a paddy field near a polling centre at Brahmanbaria-2 constituency.

Ashuganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Badrul Alam Talukder confirmed the matter to this correspondent.

The OC, quoting eyewitnesses, said locals saw the ballot paper book around 100 metres from Khoriala Government Primary School centre of Ashuganj upazila on Monday noon. The upazila nirbahi officer informed the police who rushed to the spot and recovered the book in the afternoon.

The book contained 100 pages (0269201 to 0269300), of which 28 pages (0269246 to 0269273) were marked with 'sheaf of paddy' symbol.

The front page of the book had "Jatiya Sangsad Nirbachan 244 Brahmanbaria-2, book no 2693" written on it.

The book was handed over to Ashuganj Assistant Commissioner (Land). The next step in this regard will be taken by the higher authorities, the OC added.

Jashim Uddin, an agent of 'rose' symbol, said voting in the polling centre was continuing peacefully but supporters of 'paddy sheaf' tried to snatch the ballot papers

around 11:30am and the situation turned violent. Police opened fire to bring the situation under control. As a result, voting was stopped for the time being.

Later, counting was completed without the missing ballot book. In the counting, 'sheaf of paddy' got 663 votes, 'bunch of banana' 413 votes and 'lion' 72 votes. The total number of votes in this centre is 2403.

Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner Hayat-Ud-Dowllah Khan, also the returning officer, said particulars of the missing ballot book are being collected and necessary steps will be taken. The total result of the constituency has not been announced as polling was suspended in three more centres of the upazila. The result will be announced after re-election in those centres.

Former state minister Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan was BNP nominated candidate in this constituency. Awami League (AL) had no candidate there. Though AL gave the seat to Jatiya Party, Rezaul Islam Bhuiyan with 'plough' symbol withdrew in favour of his father-in-law Ziaul Haque Mridha, who was deprived of JP nomination and contested as independent candidate with 'lion' symbol.

The contest took place between BNP's Sattar and independent candidate Moin Uddin Moin with 'bunch of banana' symbol.

9,300 Yaba pills seized from border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized 9,300 Yaba pills worth Tk 23 lakh from Agrobhulot border area under Benapole Police Station on Monday night.

Lt Col Imran H Sarker, commanding officer (CO) of BGB-21 Battalion, said informed that a gang of smugglers was bringing a consignment of Yaba tablets from India the border guards raided the area and seized 9,300 Yaba tablets.

However, the smugglers managed to flee the scene, sensing the presence of the BGB men, said the CO.

Later, a case was filed with the police station in this connection, he said.

Hospital unused, 3 years into building

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Construction of the 50-bed Saltha Upazila Health Complex was completed in 2016 but it is yet to become operational due to lack of manpower and medical equipment.

As a result, about five lakh people of the upazila are being deprived of getting medical treatment. Especially serious patients are the worst sufferers, said locals.

They have to go to Faridpur Medical College Hospital or Nagarkanda Upazila Health Complex for any kind of medical treatment. The hospital is 24 kilometres from Saltha upazila headquarters while Nagarkanda Upazila Health Complex 15 km from the headquarters.

According to the Saltha Upazila Health Department, the foundation stone of the health complex was laid by Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, MP from Faridpur-2 constituency and also the deputy leader of the house, in 2012. Most of the construction work of the health complex, except the boundary wall, was completed in 2016

spending Tk 18.7 crore under the Health Population and Nutrition Center Development Project.

On a recent visit, this correspondent found that some parts of the brick made road at the health complex compound have been washed away by rainwater.

College student Mafiqul Islam, 26, of Khoar village in Saltha upazila said a few critical patients of his area died on the way to Faridpur and Nagarkanda.

Md Jahiduzzaman Khan, 28, of Ramkantapur village said they are suffering a lot due to lack of a hospital in Saltha.

Delwar Hossain, president of Saltha upazila unit of Awami League, said they earlier informed the local lawmaker about the matter and now hopes that the problem will be resolved as the national elections have been held.

Faridpur Civil Surgeon Md Abu Zahra said they cannot start operation of the health complex due to lack of manpower and medical equipment.

He has already informed the higher authorities about the matter and hopes that the problem will be resolved soon.



The impressive building of 50-bed Saltha Upazila Health Complex in Faridpur remains a mockery for the locals as it is yet to be made operative three years after the completion of construction.

PHOTO: STAR