



Bangladesh Railway in a drive demolishes over 100 illegal structures at the western side of Shamsheernagar railway station area in Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

2-acre rly land recovered from grabbers

Over 100 illegally built structures demolished beside Shamsheernagar station

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Bangladesh Railway (BR) in a drive recovered two acres of railway land from grabbers in Shamsheernagar area of Kamalganj upazila on Wednesday.

A team, led by Executive Magistrate Md Nazrul Islam, divisional estate officer of BR Sylhet division, demolished over 100 structures, including buildings and markets on the railway land at the western side of Shamsheernagar railway station area.

Assistant Estate Officer Wahidun Nobi was present during the drive.

The team demolished one auto-rickshaw and CNG-run three-wheeler drivers' office market comprising 10 shops in it.

Some local influential people illegally built the market on the railway land some 35 years back, said the magistrate.

The team also demolished more than 40 other tin-roofed structures, including two stationery shops, two fertiliser shops and two wholesale rice shops.

Monirul Islam, senior assistant engineer of Kulaura Railway, said the drive was conducted on the basis of complaints, reports on newspapers and visits by the ministry officials earlier.

Double-line rail will be constructed on Dhaka-Sylhet rail line. In phase, all the illegal structures of this section will be evicted, he said.

Regarding the operation, Divisional Real Estate Officer and Executive Magistrate of Bangladesh Railway Nazrul Islam said illegal eviction campaign has started.

After getting manpower and bulldozers, all the installations will be removed in phases, he said.

Retired govt official builds house on canal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A former government official is building a three-storey building, allegedly by grabbing a portion of Algee canal at Baufal upazila town.

Belayet Hossain, former upazila assistant agriculture extension officer, started construction work of the building by allegedly occupying around 10 feet of the canal near Baufal Police Station.

On a recent visit to the spot, this correspondent found some workers engaged in the construction of the building and about 10 feet of the canal

had been grabbed.

"Two local residents, Shamsul Haque and Abdul Haque, took the land on lease many years ago, and I bought 16.80 decimals of the land from their heirs two years ago. I am constructing the building on that land," Belayet said.

"I also took approval to build it from Baufal municipality," he claimed.

Md Azizul Haque, a local resident, said big launches and cargo boats used to pass through the canal a few years ago, but now it has become so narrow that it is about to die as local

people are occupying both banks day by day.

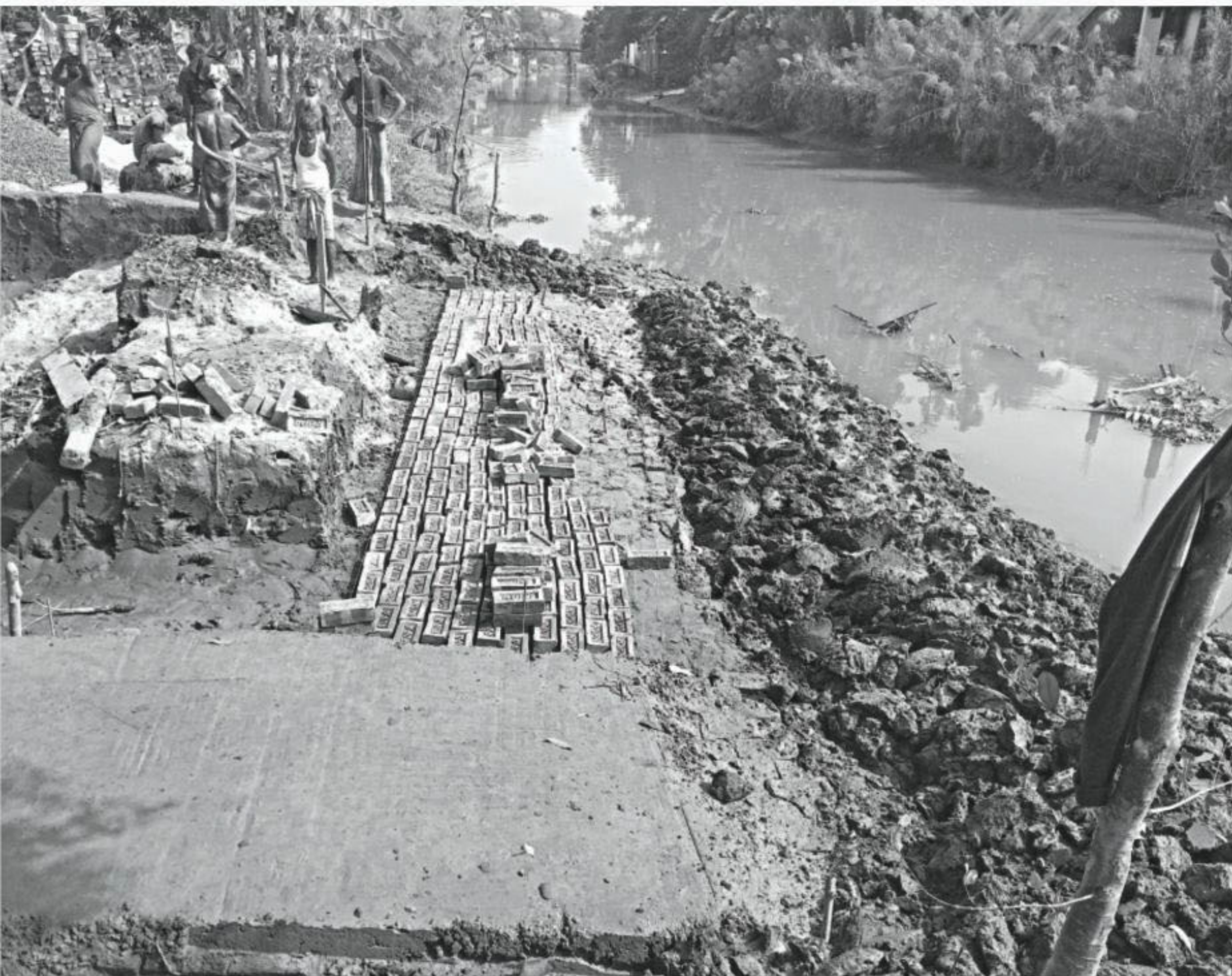
If grabbing continues like this the canal will disappear, he said.

Baufal Municipality Assistant Engineer Md Atiqul Islam said there is no scope for getting permission to build a permanent structure on the canal.

"We did not give any approval in the matter," he added.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Pijus Chandra Dey said steps will be taken after investigation.

Nobody will be allowed to grab the canal, he added.



A permanent structure is being built on Algee canal at Baufal Municipality in Patuakhali, allegedly by occupying the canal.

PHOTO: STAR

2 held with pistol

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Detectives arrested two siblings with a foreign made pistol and five bullets from Delduar upazila on Tuesday.

The arrestees are Sumon Kumar Bhoomik, 40, and Subrata Bhoomik, 32, sons of Ratan Bhoomik at Pirojpur village.

"Tipped off, a DB team led by OC Shaymal Dutta arrested the two brothers with the pistol and bullets from the village. They are accused in several narcotics related cases, said ASP Mohammad Ahaduzzaman in Tangail.



Students of different schools and colleges pledge to fight against social menaces like child marriage, dowry and drug abuse at a programme organised by Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Parishad on the ground of Etapota Adarsha High School yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

BRTA now wants rules relaxed

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Against this backdrop, the BRTA last week proposed the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry let it register the companies by giving them a deadline for fulfilling the conditions, BRTA spokesperson Mahbub-E-Rabbani said.

Mahbub added that fulfilling some of the conditions may take time as several authorities, including the police and Election Commission, are involved in the process.

"We wrote to the ministry to register those companies to make them accountable," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Another BRTA official said the move was taken as users' complaints against the companies by are piling up. Besides, the government is being deprived of a considerable source of revenue as long as the companies remain unregistered.

However, Kazi Saifun Newaz, assistant professor at the Accident Research Institute of Buet, said the companies

should not be given any registration if they do not ensure passenger safety.

He added that the problems in the registration process should be solved before issuing registrations, "because, it is hard to believe that they will fulfill the conditions within a specific time if they are given registration."

Mobile app-based ride-hailing services were launched in Dhaka in May 2015. The cabinet on January 15 last year approved the Ride-sharing Service Guidelines.

A ministry official told The Daily Star that several companies wrote to the ministry demanding amendment to the guidelines while others sought more time.

The ministry then forwarded the companies' letters to the BRTA and asked it make specific recommendations on the issue, the official said wishing anonymity.

In its January 9 letter to the ministry, the BRTA said its officials visited 10 of the 14 companies that had applied for registration.

The letter also mentioned the opinions of the registration seeking companies.

One of the safety-related conditions requires the companies to include an SOS (Save Our Souls) button in the apps to automatically send information about the driver or passenger's GPS location to 999, the national emergency helpline.

Service providing companies said national emergency helpline authorities and control room of Dhaka Metropolitan Police need to be involved to fulfill this requirement.

As a result, it is not possible for them to specifically say how long it would take for the integration of ride sharing app and the national emergency helpline service, they added.

The BRTA said since it would not be possible for a ride-sharing company to fulfill the condition without involving police, the companies can be issued registrations after they commit to fulfilling it within a deadline.

Vitamin A+

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could be a negative impression about the programme, he said, adding, "Therefore, we did not want to take any risks."

A seven-member committee, led by Prof Enayet Hussain, additional DG of Directorate General of Health Services, has been formed to investigate the matter, he said.

Children between six and 11 months get a dose of blue coloured capsule and those aged between 12 and 59 months get a dose of red vitamin A capsule.

The programme, which began in 1994, is conducted twice a year and the coverage rate is 98 percent in the country and is considered a massive. The supplementary nutrition is vital for child growth and development.

Vitamin A strengthens children's immune system, reduce frequency of diarrhoea and measles, and prevent night blindness.

Central Medical Store Depot, an organisation under the health and family welfare ministry, imported the vitamin A capsules through tendering process.

The source country of the capsules and the dates of import could not be known immediately.



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