



PHOTO: STAR

The under-construction bridge on the Ratnai river at Megharam village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila still remains incomplete. *Inset*, villagers cross the river using the bamboo bridge to go to their destinations.



# Bridge work on Ratnai river misses second deadline

*Villagers use shaky bamboo bridge to go to their destination*

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Several thousand villagers of 10 ten villages under Mogholhat union in Sadar upazila have been suffering immensely as construction of a bridge on Ratnai river is yet to be completed.

During a visit to the site at Megharam village this correspondent saw only one out of the three spans of the 120-metre long and eight-metre wide bridge has been completed since its construction work began in September 2016.

Lalmonirhat Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) Section Officer (SO) Mafizur Rahman said the contractor concerned has already missed

two deadlines on May 31, 2018 and November 31 the same year.

Two private firms Surma and Abu Bakkar jointly obtained the work order to construct the bridge at a cost of Tk 6.2 crore on 21 September, 2016, he said, adding that he has informed the district LGED authorities about the delay of the construction work.

Farmer Saber Ali, 65, of Megharam village said as the bridge construction is still incomplete they are crossing the river using the old bamboo-made bridge to go to the district headquarters.

"Moreover, we need boat to cross the river during the rainy season," Saber said.

"The contractor constructed only one span in nearly three years, how he will complete the rest two spans and the approach roads before the rainy season this year," trader Delwar Hossain, 48, of the village said.

Although the contractor is delaying the construction work of the bridge, LGED authorities are not taking any action in this regard, he alleged.

Aminul Islam, 55, of the village said, "If the authorities concerned do not take any alternative steps the construction will be delayed more and we will be the sufferers."

Contractor of the bridge Golam Rabbani

said the construction was delayed as they had to face huge troubles during the pilling work in the river.

"Pilling and other relevant underground works have been completed and the remaining two spans will be completed in three months," he said, adding that the bridge will be handed over to the LGED authorities before March 31 this year.

Lalmonirhat LGED Executive Engineer AKM Amiruzzaman said they served a notice to the contractor concerned mentioning he would be blacklisted if he failed to complete the construction work by March 31.

## Final report given in double murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

After eight months and 16 days of investigation, Kotwali Police Station yesterday submitted the final report in the female college teacher and male banker murder case, saying the banker committed suicide after killing the college teacher.

"Sub-Inspector of Kotwali Police Station Bipul Kumar Dey submitted the report to a court on Wednesday," said AFM Nasim, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station.

"Analysing the post-mortem report, forensic report and DNA report, it was found that banker Md Faruk Hasan, 33, committed suicide after killing college teacher Sajia Begum, 34. The court acquitted accused Sheikh Sohikul," the OC added.

Faruk was principal officer in the capital's Motijheel Branch of Sonali Bank and is son of Mizanur Rahman of Burushbag area in Sharsha upazila of Jashore.

Sajia was assistant professor of home economics at Government Saroda Sundory Mohila College in Faridpur and wife of Sheikh Sohikul of Sutrapur area in Dhaka.

They were found dead in a flat at Dakshin Jhiltuli area in Faridpur town on May 7, 2018.

Afsari Ahamad, aunt of Sajia, filed a murder case with Kotwali Police Station against unidentified persons on May 7. Police arrested Sheikh Sohikul in connection with the case the same day.

## Ferry services resume after six hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The ferry services on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route in the Padma resumed after six hours of disruption caused by dense fog yesterday.

Salam Hossain, Assistant General Manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Kathalbari, said, "After midnight the density of fog started to rise gradually and five ferries got stranded in the middle of the river. The ferry services were suspended around 3:00am and it resumed at 9:00am as the fog disappeared."

"400 vehicles were waiting on both sides to cross the river," he added.

## Newborn of mentally challengd woman faces uncertainty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The future of a newborn girl is uncertain as her mentally challenged mother left her at Patuakhali General Hospital.

Locals said the woman gave birth to the baby girl at Bhuria launch terminal under Sadar upazila on January 14.

After getting information from the local union parishad member Abdul Wahab Rari the same day, police from Patuakhali Police Station took the baby and her mother to the hospital. But the woman left the hospital without the baby on January 17 and has remained traceless since then.

Child specialist Dr Shiddhartha Shankar Das said the baby is well and they can discharge her, but they are anxious over her future.

Shefaee Begum, 35, of Bhaila village in Sadar upazila has been taking care of the baby and she wants to adopt her as she has no child.

"I have submitted a letter to the hospital authorities to allow me to adopt the baby," she said.

Dr Hossain Ahmed, superintendent of the hospital, said they have informed the social welfare officer to take necessary steps over the matter.

Shila Rani Das, deputy director of the social welfare department, said they have a Chotomoni Nibas at Agoiljhara upazila of Barishal to take care of kids (up to 5 years of age), and they may keep the baby there.

"I have heard that a woman wants to adopt the baby, so she should take permission from the court," she said.



## BSF picks up Bangladeshi worker

*BGB's request for flag meet yet to be complied with*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) detained a Bangladeshi national from inside Indian territory along Kantivita border in Baliadangi upazila of Thakurgaon on Wednesday night.

The detainee was identified as Shah Alam, 28, son of Quaium Ahmed of Kantivita village under the same upazila.

Local people claimed that the BSF members of Hathkhola BSF Camp detained Shah Alam about 200 yards inside India near pillar No 390/2-S while he was returning home at around 10:00pm through the border.

Sources said he went to India about three months ago without valid documents for earning by working at construction sites.

Lieutenant Colonel Tuhin Md Masud told this correspondent over cell phone that he got a message in this regard from the members of Border Guard Bangladesh posted in the area and contacted with BSF officials for holding a company commander-level flag meeting along the Zero line of the border to return the Bangladeshi national.

But BSF is yet to respond as of filing of this report at 4:30pm yesterday, the official added.

## Ex-UP member found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A former union parishad (UP) member was found murdered in Mridhabari area of Madaripur's Rajoir upazila yesterday.

Four people were detained in this connection but they were later released after interrogation, said police.

The deceased was Yuddhisthir Basu, 50, former member of Kadomtoli UP. He owned a poultry farm.

Roni Basu, 25, elder son of the victim, said his father went to the farm after having dinner on Wednesday and did not return home since then.

Informed by locals, police recovered the body from the area yesterday morning and sent it to Madaripur General Hospital for autopsy.

The body bore several injury marks, said Ziaul Morshed, officer-in-charge of Rajoir Police Station.

Yudhusthir's wife Eti Basu said there was a long-standing conflict between his husband and Jatin Basu, Sotish Basu and Pachu Basu of the area over a land. The trio killed him.

Janmadoy Basu, 22, son of Jatin Basu, refuted the allegation of killing Yuddhisthir.



Local people have recently stopped the repair work of this road connecting Aushkandi-Nabiganj-Imambari-Habiganj in Habiganj Sadar upazila, protesting use of low quality materials and substandard work.

PHOTO: STAR

## LOW QUALITY MATERIALS

## Locals stop road repair work

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Local people have stopped road repair work in Habiganj Sadar upazila on Sunday, protesting use of substandard materials and low quality work.

While talking to this correspondent, a number of residents in the area said seeing the low quality work and use of substandard construction materials it seems the road will not last long, so locals stopped the repair work.

The construction firm concerned, however, claimed that as they refused to meet the illegal demands of some local influential people they (influential people) stopped the repair work.

Roads and Highways Department in Habiganj floated a tender for repairing the 2.2 kilometre Aushkandi-Nabiganj-Imambari-Habiganj road about three months ago.

JONJB, a joint venture of three separate construction firms, got the work order of Tk 17 crore and started the repair over a week ago.

"The repair work was going on using low quality and insufficient materials," local union parishad (UP) member Abdul Mukit said.

For example, thickness of the carpeting is supposed to be 50-millimetre but it was only 35 to 37 millimetres, Mukit said.

"Thickness of the road surface should be 1.5 to 2

inches, but the contractor concerned applied only 0.5 inches thickness," local resident Engineer Syed Ali said.

"Seeing the nature of the repair work, it seems that the road will not last even a year and we cannot allow such substandard work," Songkhubdo Nagorik Andolon Habiganj unit coordinator Tofazzal Sohel said.

During a visit to the area on Tuesday, this correspondent saw carpeting of the road is already worn-out at some points.

Many locals alleged that as the carpeting has already started wearing out within a few days of repairing, one can easily assume how long the road will last.

"I don't know why the repair work was stopped," Habiganj RHD Executive Engineer Jahirul Islam said, adding that he will enquire about whether any irregularities happened or not.

Habiganj Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Towhid Bin Hasan said RHD officials are aware of the incident, adding that he will inform the senior officials about the matter and recommend taking action if any irregularities occurred there.

Contractor concerned Lutfur Rahman, however, alleged that they were doing the repair work properly, but some unscrupulous locals have been demanding illegal benefits since the work began.

Failing to get benefits, they are now preventing them from continuing the works, he alleged.