



Unabated earth lifting from the Ghagot riverbed threatens the town protection embankment at Karmonai in Kholahati union of Gaibandha.

PHOTO: STAR

# Unabated soil lifting threatens town protection dyke

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

An influential group of sand lifters has been lifting soil unabated from next to the bank of river Ghagot, threatening erosion of Gaibandha town protection dyke in the next rainy season.

Sand traders have been lifting sand and soil from the river bed for a long time using tractor trolley, and selling those to the consumers who need earth filling for building homes and other establishments. The

labourers remain busy daylong loading soil on trolleys and taking them to different destinations, which adversely affects the roads, complained local people.

If digging of the river bed is not stopped, the town protection dyke may collapse at any time during the rainy season, flooding vast tracts of municipal areas and dwelling houses under knee to waist deep water, feared the dwellers.

In the 2017 rainy season, the dyke turned

vulnerable at six points, from where water seeped through. Local people together with workers of Water Development Board (WDB) stopped the seepage and saved the dyke from being breached, villagers said.

Prior to construction of the town protection dyke around two decades ago, Gaibandha town remained under knee to waist deep water in every rainy season, causing untold suffering to town dwellers. It needed at least 15 days

for stagnant water to recede.

WDB constructed the dyke to save the town from flood water, but now the dyke has turned vulnerable at many points and in every rainy season water seeps through holes and cracks.

Local people demanded immediate halt to lifting of sand from river bed and repair of vulnerable points in the dyke, so that the dyke is not breached by surging water in the rainy season.

## DRASTIC FALL IN RIVER WATER LEVEL Water supply stops in Pirojpur town

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Water supply in the municipality is being seriously hampered for decreasing water level in the river Baleshwar.

The situation is so miserable that water supply remained suspended all day long yesterday, causing untold sufferings to the townspeople, especially those who have no reservoir for water.

"When water comes in the supply line, we collect it from there. But we are not getting water for the last few days," said Jamal Hossain of the town, adding that he did not get a single drop of water yesterday as supply of water remained suspended.

"Except supply water, we do not have alternative source of water as most ponds and canals are dried up," said another resident Ismail Hossain.

Contacted, Md Shamimur Rahman, in-charge superintendent of water supply and sanitation in the municipality, said as Baleshwar is filled with silt, water level has decreased.

They fill a big pond through a canal from the river. After processing, they supply water to the consumers. But with the beginning of winter, water level decreases in the river every year creating trouble in supplying water smoothly, said Shamimur.

But this year, the situation is worse than previous years, he said.

Md Roisuddin, work assistant of water supply branch of the municipality, said they hired a dredger yesterday to fill the pond from the river through plastic pipe.

"It is very expensive. But we are trying our best to supply water to the consumers," he said, adding that water supply will be normal within today.

Mayor of the municipality Md Habibur Rahman Malek said it is now essential to re-excavate the river for smooth supply of water.

He has also demanded setting up of a water treatment plant beside the river Kaliganga under Pirojpur Sadar upazila.

Big projects are need for materialising these works, the mayor said drawing the attention of the government for solving the problem.

Paying a visit to the water supply area beside the river Baleshwar at Khumuria village, this correspondent found that there is little water in the pond from where water is supplied after processing.

Around 7,000 households are beneficiaries of water supplied by Pirojpur municipality. It began supplying water in 1983.

## Arms, ammo seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) recovered five pistols, six bullets and two magazines from bordering Naldubi village in Shibganj upazila on Wednesday night.

Tipped off, the border guards raided the area around 10:55pm, said Lt Col SM Salahauddin, commanding officer (CO) of BGB 59 Battalion.

Sensing their presence, the driver of a three-wheeler entered Indian territory, leaving the vehicle. Later, the BGB men recovered the pistols and bullets from the vehicle and also seized it, he said.

## EMBEZZLING GOVT FUND Hospital accountant suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has suspended Accountant and Acting Cashier of 250-bed Manikganj District Hospital Syed Mohammad Mahmud Fuad temporarily, for allegedly embezzling Tk 70 lakh from the hospital fund.

Following submission of a probe report recently, DGHS Director (Administration) Abul Kalam Azad issued the temporary suspension order on January 24.

The DGHS authorities earlier assigned Sadar Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer (Acting) Mohammad Minhaz Uddin to investigate allegations against Fuad.

According to the investigation report, Fuad withdrew over Tk 42 lakh in 10 different phases through forging signature of the hospital's Resident Medical Officer Dr Lutfor Rahman.

Besides, he misappropriated around Tk 18 lakh as cleaners' wages, Tk 4.58 lakh as fuel cost and Tk 3 lakh from the 'User Fees' fund and had not been paying house rent since March, 2017, says the probe report.

## Family seeks capital punishment for Shoyon's killers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Family members and relatives of eight-year-old Masud Rana Shoyon, who was killed after abduction in 2013, at a press conference at Tangail Press Club yesterday demanded capital punishment for the culprits involved in the murder.

Victim's uncle Abdul Momen read out a written statement in presence of Shoyon's mother Masuda Begum and maternal grandmother Mazeda Begum.

They also alleged that the three accused, currently on bail, had been threatening the deceased's family members to withdraw the case filed against them, otherwise, they would face dire consequences.

According to the read out statement, criminals abducted Shoyon, a Class III student at Matikata Government Primary School in Bhuapur upazila, on September 30, 2013.

Later, the kidnappers phoned Shoyon's

mother Masuda, a resident of Ruhuli village in the upazila, and demanded Tk 5 lakh as ransom for her son's release.

Failing to get back the minor boy even after paying Tk 2 lakh, Shoyon's grandmother Mazeda filed a case with Bhuapur Police Station against some unidentified people.

The case was later shifted to Detective Branch (DB) of Police and after two years, detectives arrested Shoyon's stepfather Jahangir Hossain, 30, and his two associates Sohel Mia, 20, and Goutam Chandra, 30, as suspects.

The trio admitted to the law enforcers that after abduction they took the boy in Tengri area in Madhupur upazila, strangled him there and buried the body beside a graveyard. Following their confessional statements under Section 164, police recovered Shoyon's skeleton from Madhupur on March 18, 2015.

After a few months they came out of prison on bail.



Hamidul Islam controls traffic at BDR Gate in Lalmonirhat town. He has been doing the job voluntarily for over a decade.

PHOTO: STAR

## Selfless service

### Hamidul volunteering as traffic signalman for over a decade

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

A man from ultra-poor family has been working at BDR Gate in the town as a volunteer traffic signalman for over a decade for people's welfare.

Earlier, Hamidul Islam, 52, used to pull rickshaw to run his four-member family. BDR Gate, an important area of the town, always witnesses severe traffic jam. Before 2015, there was no traffic police in the busy area.

Seeing people's sorrows, one day Hamidul decided to work as traffic signalman in the area, said locals.

In February 2007, all on a sudden, he was seen controlling traffic in the area voluntarily and since then he has been reducing jam in the area

by whistling from 8:00am to 8:00pm every day, said townspeople.

On-duty traffic police constable Sirazul Islam in the area said Hamidul helps traffic police control the traffic jam in this important point of the town.

Traffic jam is common scenario here due to railway level crossing and Hamidul is very much helpful in controlling traffic jam, so no unexpected incident occurs here, said Sirazul.

Hamidul said he wants to continue his volunteer job till his last day.

Each three-wheeler and battery-run easy-bike driver at BDR Gate willingly gives Hamidul Tk 5 to Tk 10 as token money every day. Thus, he earns Tk 150 to Tk 160 every day. With the little money, he bears education cost of his two school

going children.

"We give Hamidul a little money for tea as he helps us a lot to control traffic in the area," said Mozammel Haque, a three-wheeler driver at BDR Gate.

Asad Islam, a local businessman at BDR Gate, said he salutes Hamidul as he has set an example for others in participating in good work in the society.

Hamidul along with his wife Rahima Khatun and ninth grader son Rakib Islam and third grader daughter Pakhi Akhter live at an abandoned railway staff quarter in the town's Sahebpara area as he has no house and land.

Rahima said she helps her husband to maintain the family burden by earning from sewing clothes of others.



Masuda Begum, mother of murdered schoolboy Shoyon, talks to the journalists at Tangail Press Club yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Key accused held in case for killing mother-in-law

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police arrested a man on Wednesday evening from Islampur area in Kamalganj upazila for killing his 55-year-old mother-in-law in Satirjirgaon village in the upazila on Monday night.

The body was recovered from her house in the village at around 10:30am on Tuesday.

The arrestee is Mahmud Mia, 35, husband of Salma Begum and son-in-law of the victim -- Gofurun Begum, wife of Yunus Mia of the area.

Family members said Mahmud strangled the victim in front of his son over a family feud.

Gofurun's relatives found her dead at her house on Tuesday morning and on information, police recovered the body.

Gofurun's brother Abdul Ali said 10-year-old Sunny Mia saw his father Mahmud strangle his grandmother at night. As Sunny screamed, Mahmud left the scene after giving him Tk 20.

Earlier in the evening, Mahmud and his mother-in-law locked in an altercation as she sent her daughter Salma to the Middle East without his permission.

Kamalganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Arifur Rahman told this correspondent that injuries were found on the body of the victim. It is suspected that the victim was strangled to death at night.

"The body was sent to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Victim's brother filed a case against Mahmud on Tuesday and we have arrested the accused," he added.

## Vessel partially sinks

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A cargo vessel capsized partially as cracks developed in its hull on the Meghna river near Chandpur launch terminal in the early hours yesterday.

The vessel MV Haji Abdul Jalil started from Haldia Port of India on January 23 with around 850 tonnes of fly ash, a raw material for producing cement, worth around Tk 85 lakhs.

It was heading for Holcim Cement Factory at Narayanganj, said Md Asad, master of the ship.

When the ship reached Meghna river near Chandpur launch terminal, cracks developed in its hull and water started entering the ship.

The ship's crew quickly anchored the vessel on the river's bank near the launch terminal, but around half of the ship sank.

However, there was no causality and all the 11 crew members are safe, though the fly ash was damaged. River police and fire services members were working to raise the vessel.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) joint director Mahmudul Hasan, stationed at Chandpur, told journalists that the ship was unfit and it was overloaded with goods.

"We will take legal action against those responsible," he said.