



Vehicular movement on Tangail-Mymensingh highway halted for over an hour yesterday morning as supporters of Syed Ehsan Abdullah, a 'rebel' Awami League activist contesting as independent candidate for Ghatail upazila parishad chairman post, block the road in protest at attacks on his election camps and motorcade.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

UZ CHAIRMAN POLLS IN GHATAIL

Highway blocked as 'rebel' AL candidate's motorcade attacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Supporters of Syed Ehsan Abdullah, a 'rebel' Awami League (AL) activist contesting as independent candidate for the post of chairman in Ghatail upazila parishad, kept busy Tangail-Mymensingh highway blocked for an hour yesterday morning in protest at attacks on his election camps and motorcade.

"Unidentified criminals vandalised my election camps and removed banners and

posters at Lakhindar, Sagardighi and Rasulpur unions on Friday. They also threatened my workers not to conduct election campaigns," Ehsan said in a complaint lodged with the local police station.

"The criminals attacked my motorcade at Dhalapara and vandalised two cars when I was on an election campaign today [Saturday]. The attack left three people injured," he added.

Ehsan, an industrialist, is son of Tuhin Abdullah, vice-president of

Tangail district unit of AL.

Being informed, supporters of Ehsan demonstrated in the upazila headquarters and blocked the busy Tangail-Mymensingh highway in Bus Stand area from 8:00am to 9:00am, causing kilometres-long tailback with hundreds of vehicles stuck on both directions.

Later, the agitators went to the office of the upazila nirbahi officer and staged a sit-in programme there.

They left the place after officials of

local police and civil administrations assured them of taking action over the incident after investigation.

Elections to 12 upazila parishads in Tangail will be held today.

Six candidates are contesting for the chairman post in Ghatail upazila. They are AL-nominated Shahidul Islam Lebu, party 'rebels' Arif Hossain, Shahidul Islam Hasting, Shafiqul Islam Khan and Syed Ehsan Abdullah, and Jaker Party-nominated candidate Moniruzzaman Khan.

30,000 plants of forest dept destroyed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Miscreants have destroyed around 30,000 saplings meant for planting on a forest land in Panikhaori area under Noldori beat in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar.

Under a plan to grow 30,000 trees in Panikhaori area under Noldori forest, the forest department made a nursery with as many plants and prepared 50 acres of land under social forestation programme, said Kulaura Range Officer Manik Ranjan Dey.

"A few days ago Dil Bahadur, Khasi headman of Lobonchara Punjee, removed our boundary fences and destroyed some saplings and I filed a GD with Kulaura Police Station against him on March 21. Lastly miscreants destroyed all the 30,000 saplings."

"On Friday afternoon, forest guards saw the destroyed plants, some of them cut and others burnt. Earlier on different occasions, the forest department filed 11 cases against the headman on charge of occupying forest land."

"We filed a complaint with Kulaura Police Station on Friday night and informed senior officials of Sylhet forest division of the incident," he said.

Asked about the matter, headman Dil Bahadur said, "The forest department's complaint is fully wrong. They destroy our betel leaf gardens for plantation in the name of social forestation. We don't destroy forest as it is our asset."

Kulaura Police Station Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Sanjay Chakraborty said necessary action will be taken after investigation.

KALAPARA UZ POLLS

AL expels seven 'rebel' leaders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Kalapara upazila Awami League (AL) has expelled its former president of Tiakhali union unit Syed Akhtaruzzaman Khoka Mia, also the 'rebel' chairman candidate in the upazila parishad polls, and six other leaders for working for Khoka.

Election to the upazila parishad is scheduled for today.

Upazila AL Vice President Md Sultan Mahmud came up with the announcement at a press conference at its party office in the upazila headquarters on Friday.

The expelled leaders are Khoka, Abdul Maleq Akhond, joint secretary of the upazila unit, Md Sohag Akhond, former president of Mohipur union Sramik League, Syed Moshiur Rahman Shimu, vice president of Kalapara municipality unit Jubo League, Md Humayun Kabir Keramot, president of Chakamoya union unit AL, Md Al Amin, president of Chakamoya union unit Chhatra League and Rafiq Hawlader, secretary of Chakamoya union unit Sramik League.

Rakibul Ahsan, secretary of Kalapara upazila unit AL, is taking part in the polls as the party-nominated candidate.

Expelled leader Shimu said there is no scope to expel anyone from the party on the election issue. It is a wrong decision.

Youth's throat-slit body found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The throat-slit body of a missing youth was found in Ghoraghat upazila of the district on Friday.

The deceased was Md Ratan Mia, 30, son of Afzal Hossain of Sultanpur village in Gaibandha's Palashbari upazila.

Amirul Islam, officer in charge of Ghoraghat Police Station, said the youth went out of home on Thursday afternoon and since then he remained missing.

Informed by locals, police recovered the body from a maize field at Cobindapur village in Ghoraghat on Friday evening and sent it to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

An eye of the victim was gouged out, said the OC, adding that criminals might have killed the youth over previous enmity.

3 schoolgirls saved from early marriage

Local admin foil nine child marriage bids this month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Three schoolgirls were saved from early marriage in Sirajganj Sadar upazila on Thursday and Friday night, thanks to timely intervention by the local administration.

They are 10th grader Nipa Khatun, daughter of Mojnu Rahman of Saydabad village, eighth grader Sumi Khatun, daughter of Shafiqul Islam of Bagbati village, and sixth grader Maya Akter, daughter of Mainul Haque of Ekdala village, in the upazila.

During the drive, the court also fined six people for arranging girl's marriage under legal age.

Being informed, a mobile court led by Sadar upazila Assistant Commissioner (AC Land) Mohammad Anisur Rahman went to Saydabad village on Friday night and saved Nipa from under-age marriage.

The court also fined three people--marriage registrar Hazrat Ali, bride's father Mojnu and bridegroom Sirajul Islam--Tk 10,000 each.

On Thursday night, the court raided Shafiqul's Bagbati village home and stopped his daughter Sumi's marriage with Anwar Hossain, son of Ishaque Ali, as he was below the legal age.

The court also realised Tk 10,000 fine from both Shafiqul and Ishaque.

The same court then went to Mainul's house at Ekdala village and foiled his under-age daughter Maya's marriage with Kawsar Hossain, 25, son of Abdul Bari.

"Whenever we hear about arrangement of any early marriage, we conduct mobile court drives and stop it instantly," the AC Land said, adding that, in many cases they are not informed.

With the recent incidents, they have so far managed to prevent a total of nine early marriage bids in Sadar upazila in the last one month, the AC Land said.

Samsul shines in radish seeds, shows way to others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

It was only around 10 years ago when Samsul Islam, now 35, of Panchapukur village in Sadar upazila obtained a graduation degree from a local college with a dream like many others to join a government job.

His dream shattered soon when he realised that getting a government job is not that easy.

But he did not lose his heart and decided to do something special in agriculture sector on the 15 bighas of farmland his father has.

With his hard work and innovative agriculture method, Samsul has now become an idol to many in his locality as well as two other adjacent villages.

He has not only changed his own fate, but also the socio-economic state of three villages -- Polashbari, Marchia and Panchapukur -- as many of the farmers are now adopting his cultivation method.

"As the soil here is suitable for radish farming and farmers get a good price of their produce in



Graduate Samsul Islam of Panchapukur village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila takes care of his radish seed field. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN

the early winter," Samsul said, adding that in an attempt to do something new he started cultivating radish, consulting with agriculture experts.

"I suggested Samsul to cultivate

radish twice in a season," Panchapukur union Sub Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO) Anwarul Islam said, adding that one can cultivate radish first in October-November which will bring a hand-

some profit and then in between December and March, which has a great demand as seeds.

As per the SAAO's suggestion, Samsul started radish seeds cultivation in one bigha land in 2014.

"One kilogram of seed is required for one bigha land with the cultivation cost of Tk 8,000 to Tk 10,000," said Samsul, son of Hashim Uddin of Panchapukur village.

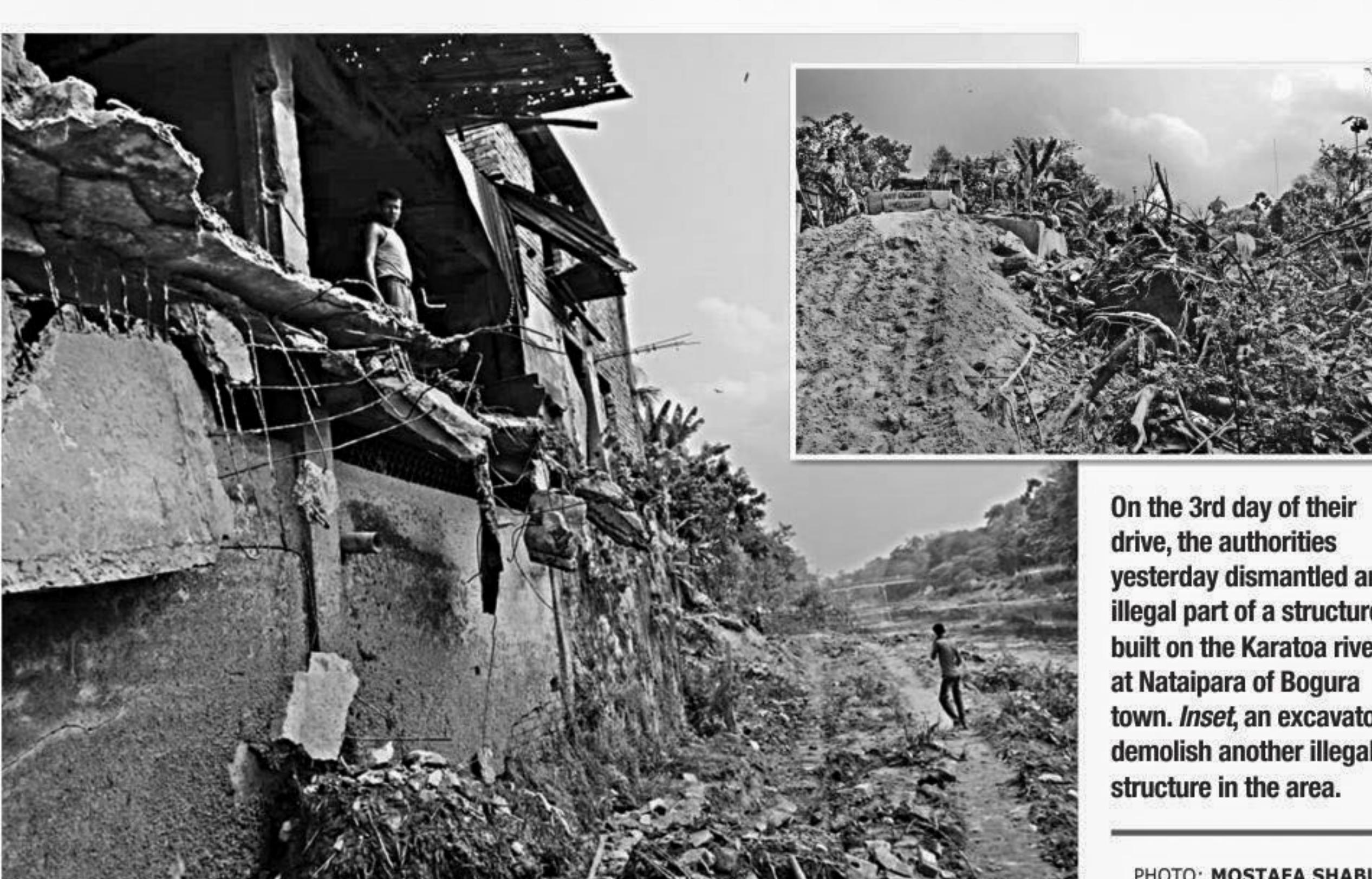
In the first year, he produced 220 kg seeds and earned Tk 30,000, he added.

Since then, Samsul gradually expanded the area of cultivation and this year he cultivated radish seeds in 10 bighas of land, he said.

Within the next five years, Samsul bought motorcycle, constructed a brick-built house and enrolled his son to a local kindergarten school.

A number of growers like Ekramul, 50, Saiful, 40, Ainul, 45, said after incurring consecutive loss in paddy and potato farming, Samsul's innovative agriculture method helped them to get rid of those unhappy days.

Drive on for third day to free Karotoa



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Bogura district administration and Water Development Board (WDB) for the third consecutive day yesterday continued their joint drive to remove illegal structures encroaching on the Karotoa river.

The joint team yesterday tore down six small structures including toilets built by Bogura municipality in Nataipara area of Bogura town, said Tomal Hossain, assistant commission (AC) of land in Bogura Sadar.

On Friday, they demolished 12 small structures in Bhatkandi area of the town, while on Thursday, the authorities dismantled nine small structures, including a water pump house built by the municipality from the banks of the river in Maltinagar area, he added.

According to a survey conducted by the land office in Sadar upazila in February through March last year, at least 38 illegal structures of different sizes were constructed by encroaching on the river during the last 10 to 15 years.

On November 25 the same year,

The Daily Star ran a report on the issue, headlined "Onslaught on Karotoa: Wanton grabbing leaves the river on its death throes".

On February 25, prior to launching the drive, the district administration had sent out notices to unlawful occupiers, asking them to remove their establishments, said AC (Land) Tomal.

During visits to the area, establishments belonging to many of the listed encroachers, however, were still found to be intact.

On Thursday, the first day of the drive, the authorities were forced to back down from removing a mosque in Maltinagar area as hundreds of locals including women and students from madrasas raised objection by taking position at the site.

Zulfiqer Ramhan Pramanik, president of Maltinagar Baitul Hamid Jam'a Mosque, said some parts of the land where the mosque is built belong to private owners, while some parts of it belong to the river.

Despite the fact, the structure of the mosque does not hinder the flow of the river, he said, adding that religious sentiment played a role when locals gathered to protect the mosque.

When contacted, Hasan Mahmud, executive engineer of WDB in Bogura, said they would take necessary action after verifying the claims made by the mosque authorities.

AC (Land) Tomal said according to CS (Cadastral Survey) map, the land, on with the building of the mosque is located, belongs to the river.

The drive will go on until all illegal structures are removed from the river, he added.

Ziaur Rahman, secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) in Bogura, said, "[Although] there are over a hundred illegal structures on the banks of the Karotoa river in Bogura Sadar upazila, the district administration's list only has [names of] 38 grabbers."

Responding to the claim, AC (Land) Tomal said, "The list of grabbers we are following now is still incomplete. However, we are working on to prepare a comprehensive list of grabbers in Sadar upazila. It'll take another two months."