



The spot of train accident near Baramchal railway station in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar on June 23. Right, loose and missing nuts and bolts on a rail track in Srimangal area in Moulvibazar shows awful condition of the track.



PHOTO: STAR

AKHAURA-SYLHET ROUTE

Train journey risky as bridges shaky

Speed limit set at 5 km per hour at a hundred spots to avert accident

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The decades-old railway bridges on Akhaura-Sylhet route are in a poor condition as most of the wooden sleepers, banded clips, and nuts and bolts are damaged or missing.

Bamboo slabs have been used in place of the sleepers in some places as a makeshift measure.

The safety issue of train passengers has come to the fore following occurrence of several accidents including a fatal one on June 23 at Baramchal in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar, which left five people killed and over a hundred others injured.

The 179-kilometre-long Akhaura-Sylhet track

crosses about 250 big and small bridges that were built during the British period, according to the engineering department of Bangladesh Railway (BR).

Abdul Karim Kim, convener of Songkhubdo Nagorik Andolon in Sylhet, said the railway bridges have become unsafe for train movement.

Under the Sylhet division of the East Zone of BR, the rail bridges, constructed on hills and rivers 60 to 70 years ago, have become unsteady due to a lack of maintenance and repair.

None of the bridges have been reconstructed since their construction.

He called upon the railway authorities to repair the bridges immediately to avoid any accidents.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon in Habiganj, said several bridges are now even more risky as there is pressure of water of the streams flowing from the hills.

Indiscriminate sand extraction from the rivers adds to the problem.

Sylhet Railway Station Assistant Station Manager Sajib Kumar Malakar said nearly 100 small and big rail bridges are vulnerable in the Sylhet-Akhaura section.

The authorities have set a speed limit of five kilometres an hour for the trains while crossing the bridges, to avoid accidents.

A few days ago, this correspondent visited a bridge over a canal about a kilometre away from

Srimangal railway station of Moulvibazar. It was found that several nuts and bolts remained missing in the eight sleepers on the rail bridge.

According to the railway schedule, six intercity trains -- Parabat, Jayantika, Paharika, Udayan, Upaban and Kalni express -- ply Dhaka-Sylhet-Chattogram railway track twelve times a day. About 25,000 to 30,000 passengers use the rail route daily.

Abul Kalam, who lives near Srimangal railway station in Srimangal upazila of Moulvibazar, said there are at least 20 bridges between Srimangal and Kamalganj, more than half of which have been repaired with bamboo sticks.

3 drug peddlers get life term

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A Kushtia court on Thursday sentenced three drug peddlers to life term imprisonment.

The lifers are bus driver Thantu Mandal, 45, and his assistants Sagar Ali, 35, of Sadar upazila and Sohel Rana of Mirpur upazila in the district.

According to the prosecution, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested the trio with 1.5 kg heroin from a passenger bus in Sadar upazila on September 15, 2017 and Abdur Rashid, deputy assistant director of Rab-12, filed a case with Sadar Police Station.

After examining witnesses and evidences, District and Sessions Judge Arup Kumar Goswami found the three guilty and pronounced the verdict.

Cattle trader's body found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Body of a missing cattle trader was found at Babra village in Kaliganj upazila on Thursday.

The deceased is Hossain Ali, 55, son of late Arshed Ali of the village.

Police recovered the hanging body of Ali from a mango tree in the area and sent it to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

The victim's son Arshed Ali said his father went out of home to buy cattle at Ganna bazar on Wednesday morning and remained missing since then.



A physician examines one of the child patients, infected with food poisoning, at Pabna Medical College Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

One dies from food poisoning, 40 others fall sick

They fell sick after taking khichuri at religious gathering

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A schoolgirl died from food poisoning early Sunday while 40 others fell sick after taking food at a religious gathering (milad mahfil) at Char-Bolorampur village in Sadar upazila on Friday.

The deceased, Sumaia Akhter Sukhi, 13, daughter of Mohammad Selim Uddin of the village, was a Class VII student at Shahid Ahmed Rafik Girls' High School.

Of the sick victims, 27 including Sukhi's younger sister Bithi Akhter are now undergoing treatment at Pabna General Hospital in critical condition while the rest were

given first aid.

Assistant Director of 250-bed Pabna Medical College Hospital Dr Ranjan Kumar Dutta said some 40 to 50 patients of different ages infected with diarrhoea came to the hospital for treatment between 12.00am and 2:00am early Sunday.

"During primary investigation we came to know that all the patients took 'Khichuri' at a milad mahfil on Friday afternoon," Dr Ranjan said, adding that the situation turned serious when a girl died early yesterday.

So far they have provided treatment to nearly 50 patients,

including 11 children, and of them 27 are now undergoing treatment at the hospital, the doctor said.

While talking to some of the admitted patients at the hospital this correspondent learnt that they all went to attend a milad mahfil at the house of late Iman Ali of the village on Friday afternoon and started falling sick one after another after taking 'Khichuri' there.

Dr Shafikul Hasan, head of medicine department at the hospital, said the victims might have fallen sick due to food poisoning.

Labourer stabbed dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A day labourer, who was stabbed allegedly by his rivals over land dispute on Saturday, succumbed to his injuries at Sirajganj General Hospital yesterday.

The deceased is Amzad Hossain Mandal, 42, son of Fayeaz Mandal of Teghuri village in Sirajganj's Kamarkhand upazila.

Police and family members said there was a longstanding conflict between Amzad and Md Hafizul over the land.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Kamarkhand Police Station Habibul Islam said Hafizul and his men called Amzad out of the house on Saturday night. Later, he was stabbed indiscriminately near his house.

Critically injured Amzad was rushed to Sirajganj General Hospital where he died yesterday morning.

Police arrested Hafizul in connection with the incident, said the OC, adding that a case was filed, accusing five people including the arrestee.

Ward councillor demands Tk 3 lakh from trader

Forcibly takes Tk 70000, gives threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A ward councillor of Birganj municipality allegedly demanded Tk 3 lakh extortion money from a furniture trader and forcibly took Tk 70,000 from his store on Thursday.

Trader Monirul Islam Bablu made the allegation yesterday afternoon at Dinajpur Press Club against Bonomali Roy, 40, a councillor of Ward 7 in the municipality.

Monirul said he filed a case in this connection with Birganj Police Station the same day.

Before leaving his furniture store located in front of Sonali Bank in the area, the councillor and his five cohorts assaulted him physically and threatened to build a drain through the store unless the remainder of the extortion money, Tk 2.30 lakh, is paid to Bonomali, said Monirul.

"They also threatened to kill me if the extortion money is not paid as demanded," he also said.

Shakila Parvin, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they were trying to arrest the accused.

Contacted, Councillor Bonomali refuted the allegation.



The Bongshai river devours a culvert along with parts of Kurni-Fatepur-Kanchanpur road at Fotepur union in Mirzapur upazila of Tangail as erosion by the river has taken a serious turn in the area during the last several days.

PHOTO: STAR

Two youths get life term for rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A court yesterday awarded life term imprisonment to two youths for gang rape of a teenager in Mollahat upazila of Bagerhat.

Judge SM Saiful Islam of Bagerhat Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-1 delivered the verdict in presence of the convicts in the afternoon.

The convicts, Abdur Rahim Molla, 23, son of Mohsin Mollah of Barogaola village in Mollahat upazila, and Jahidul Shikder, 22, son of late Abu Bakar Sikder of the same village, were ordered to pay a fine of Tk 100,000 and in default, to stay one year more in prison.

In addition, under the Pornography

Act, the two were awarded seven years' imprisonment and fine of Tk one lakh each.

According to the case statement, Rahim and Zahidul raped a teenage girl of Barogaola village after entering her house on June 23 in 2017.

The criminals also captured video of the scene.

The victim filed a case with Mollahat Police Station against the two and police arrested them.

After investigation, on November 27 that year, the then Mollahat Police Station officer-in-charge Abu Sayeed Khairul Anam placed charge sheet to the court.

The allegation was proved and the judge gave the verdict, said Public Prosecutor Siddiqur Rahman.

Murderer gets life term

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Mymensingh court yesterday sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for killing his neighbour in Trishal upazila in 1999.

The convict is Tabarok Hossain Akanda, son of Abdur Rashid Akanda of Amirabari in Trishal.

The court also fined the convict Tk 10,000, in default to suffer three months more in jail.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Md Iqbal Hossain handed down the verdict, said Sheikh Kabirul Islam, court inspector of Mymensingh.

According to the case statement, Tabarok Hossain and his neighbour Farhad Hossain Akanda, locked in an altercation on December 20 in 1999 over a disputed land.

At one stage, Tabarok attacked Farhad with sharp weapons, leaving him critically injured.

Locals and family members took him to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Farhad's elder brother Sarwar Hossain Akanda lodged a case accusing nine persons with Trishal Police Station the following day and later police pressed charge sheet against them.

Eight other accused of the case were acquitted as the charges brought against them were not proved, said the court inspector.

BARAPIKURIA POWER PLANT

Jobseekers take to street for second day, 10 detained

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police yesterday detained 10 people and dispersed nearly several hundred others who, for the second consecutive day, blockaded the road to Barapukuria 525MW Coal-Fired Power Plant in Parbatipur upazila.

On Saturday, the agitators blockaded the road for a couple of hours, demanding manual work at the plant. They claimed that at least 154 of them deserve jobs there as they had taken part in construction work of the plant's 275MW unit (3rd) in 2015.

Around 10:30am yesterday, after they took to the street again, police used truncheons to push them out of the road that connects Parbatipur and

Pulbari upazilas.

Out of the 10 detained by police, two were leaders of the movement's organising committee. They are Habibur Rahman and Abu Sayeed.

Sultan Mahmud, in charge of Barapukuria police outpost, confirmed the incident.

Mahbub Rahman, chief engineer (acting) of the power plant, said there was no vacancies for workers and Power Development Board is the sole authority of employment at the plant.

One of the agitators said they were employed as construction workers at the 3rd unit of the power plant in 2015 and after the work was done, they could not find any work in the area.