



Traffic has been heavy and slow on highways in Sirajganj as Roads and Highways Department is repairing several regional highways, *inset*, that were damaged by floods. The photos were taken yesterday from Hatikumrul-Bonpara highway.

PHOTO: STAR



HIGHWAY REPAIR WORKS IN SIRAJGANJ

Holidaymakers face huge tailbacks on battered roads

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

When highways are swamped with heavy traffic ahead of Eid, the authorities usually start repairing those.

This year is no different. Repair work on several highways in Sirajganj started only a few days ago, adding to the woes of travellers and transport workers.

Holidaymakers going home for Eid in 22 northern and southern districts, crossing the Bangabandhu bridge, should brace for a longer travel time due to the ongoing

repair work in Sirajganj.

Currently, Sirajganj-Bogura, Hatikumrul-Bogura and Hatikumrul-Bonpara highways are undergoing repair. Incessant rain and floods over the past month left these regional highways battered and damaged.

The damage is extensive in about 18 kilometres of road from Hatikumrul to Chandaikona toward Bogura and 25 kilometres from Hatikumrul to Mannannagar on way to Bonpara.

Ashrafur Islam, executive engineer of Roads and Highways (RHD) in

Sirajganj, said, "We've already started repair work on Bonpara-Hatikumrul highway and Hatikumrul-Bogura highway ahead of Eid-ul-Azha."

Now the potholes in Hatikumrul-Bonpara highway are being fixed with bricks and carpeting work on the Hatikumrul-Bogura highway is going on.

The RHD in 2017-18 fiscal year undertook repair work of the Hatikumrul-Bogura highway at a cost of Tk 15 core and the Hatikumrul-Bonpara highway at Tk 8 core. But as

the contractor firm did not complete the work, RHD had to start urgent repair work of the highways ahead of the Eid, Ashrafur also said.

Frustrated by long delays on the road, bus passenger Eunus Ali said thanks to the congestion on the road due to the repair work, it took him more than double the usual time, nearly two and a half hours, to reach Bonpara from Hatikumrul.

Truck driver Sohel said with all the work going on and an increased number of vehicles loaded with sacrificial

animals on the road, passing ten kilometres distance from Hatikumrul nowadays takes at least an hour.

Hatikumrul Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Akteruzzaman said a long queue of vehicles is being formed on the only available lane on both Hatikumrul-Bonpara and Hatikumrul-Bogura highways due to the ongoing work.

He also said the situation might worsen if the work is continued amid the Eid rush.

Man killed, 10 hurt in clash over disputed land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man was killed at least 10 others were injured in a clash between two rival groups of villagers during handing over possession of a disputed land in Nawabganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Liton Mia, 35, son of Atiar Rahman, was a resident of Chawkkarim village in the upazila.

The injured were admitted to Nawabganj Upazila Health Complex, Phulbari Upazila Health Complex and M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur.

Quoting the villagers, police said around two acres of land had been illegally occupied by Atiar Rahman of Chawkkarim village for the last 18 years.

On July 29, Dinajpur Joint District and Session Judge Court-3 ordered the authorities concerned to hand over the land to its original owner Rafiq Uddin of Bhatka Joypur village.

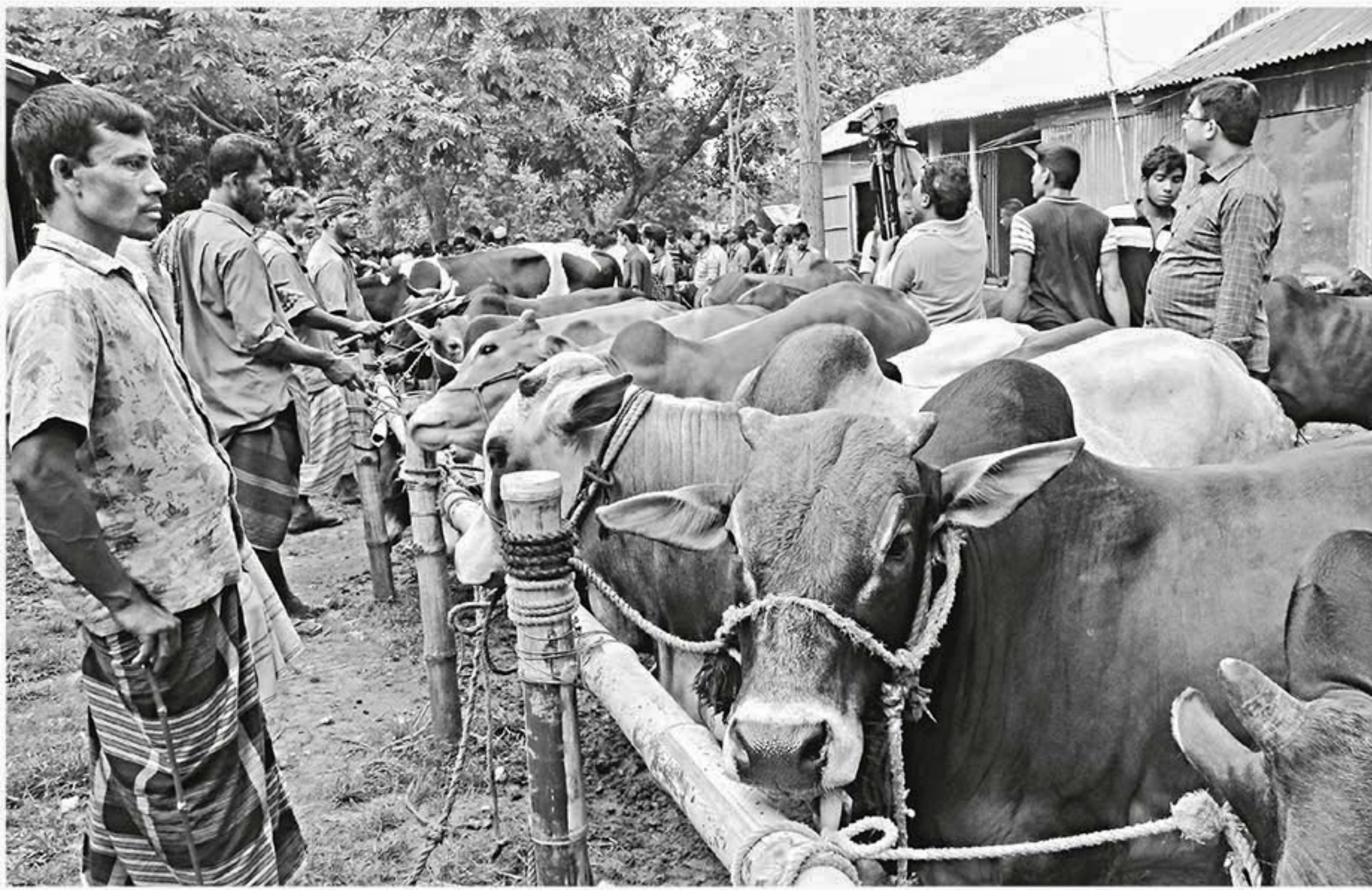
As per the court order, Shah Alam, a Nazir at Dinajpur court, went to the village yesterday morning to hand over possession of the land to Rafiq.

In the meantime, some hired goons of Atiar, equipped with sharp weapons, attacked Rafiq and his men, leaving 10 people injured.

On information, police went to the spot and fired rubber bullets to bring the situation under control that left another man wounded.

Of the injured, Liton succumbed to his injuries on way to a hospital in Dinajpur. Officer in Charge (OC) of Nawabganj Police Station Subrata Sarkar said.

Additional police have been deployed in the area to avert any untoward incident, the OC said, adding that a tense situation was prevailing at the village.



Cattle farmers and traders are seen a bit upset as the prices have dropped sharply in all the 25 cattle markets in Lalmonirhat. The photo was taken from Durakuti Haat in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

CATTLE MARKETS IN LALMONIRHAT

Farmers, traders unhappy over low price

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Cattle markets in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila are seeing an oversupply on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha as flood-hit farmers are putting up their cows for sale due to dearth of animal fodder.

Villages and chars along the Teesta and Dharala rivers were hit hard by flash flood twice lately when huge amounts of fodder got damaged.

As a result, farmers and small scale traders are seeing no option but to sell off their cows. In consequence, the prices have dropped sharply in all 25 cattle markets of the district.

Mozibur Rahman, 55, brought three cows to sell at Durakuti Haat, one of the biggest cattle markets in the Sadar upazila, on August 6, five days before Eid-ul-Azha.

He could sell only one cow at Tk 42,000 and returned home with the rest. "I bought the cow at Tk 55,000 three months ago but now had to sell it at a loss in the same market,"

said Mozibur, a farmer of Kalmati village located on the bank of Teesta. "I would never have sold it at such a low price if was not in a financial crisis," he told this correspondent.

Another farmer, Nazu Miah, 50, of Bongram village said, "Grasses and hays were largely damaged by the recent flood. The crisis of fodder has compelled us to sell cattle at low rates.

"I had nurtured four cows with an aim to earn Tk 200,000 by selling them. But I got only Tk 82,000 by selling two of them, the rest are still unsold," he said adding, supply of cattle was greater than demand this season.

Jitish Chandra Sen of Falimari char had 19 cows. "My two cows got washed away by flood while I have sold 10 dirt-cheap. This happened due to an acute crisis of fodder in our flood affected village," said the 63-year-old farmer.

"Prices have fallen sharply this

year due to oversupply. The flood affected farmers are bringing their cattle but are returning with disappointment." Said Hazrat Ali, a trader in Durakuti Haat.

Similar condition was prevailing in 25 other cattle markets in the district, he told this paper.

Mizanur Rahman, 50, who came from Thana Para of Lalmonirhat town, said he purchased one cow at price lower than last year. "From a large number of verities, I selected one and bought it at Tk 48,000," said the content customer.

Lalmonirhat Zila Parishad Chairman Matiar Rahman was at the Haat on August 6.

"Buyers are happy to get cattle at reasonable prices but flood affected farmers and small scale traders are unhappy as they are being compelled to sell off their cows on the occasion of Eid," said Matiar, also general secretary of Awami League Lalmonirhat district unit.

Youth held over rape charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police on Friday night arrested a youth in connection with a case filed for raping a sixth grader girl in Barlekha upazila of the district on August 6.

The arrestee, Mahir Ahmed, 22, a private car driver, is son of Khalil Uddin in Kumarsail village in the upazila, Sub Inspector of Barlekha Police Station Ratan Kumar Halder, also investigation officer of the case, said.

According to the case statement, Mahir forcibly picked up the girl while she was returning home from school on August 6, took her to a nearby jungle and raped her.

Meanwhile, victim's father filed a case with Barlekha Police Station against Mahir the same night.

Arson attack on Pabna trader's house

The victim's teenage son was murdered on Nov 30 last year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Criminals set fire to the house of trader Md Rabiul Islam at Dublia village in Pabna Sadar upazila early Friday, apparently in a bid to kill the family members.

The residents of the house, however, managed to save themselves although the fire caused serious damage to valuables.

"A group of criminals set fire to our house when we were asleep at about 1:00am on Friday. Sensing the matter, we managed to leave unhurt with the help of neighbours," Rabiul Islam said.

Four motorbikes, goods, valuables and cash worth a total of Tk 20 lakh was destroyed in the fire, he added.

Rabiul filed a case with Ataikula Police Station on Friday, accusing anonymous people on charge of setting the fire to his house with a target to kill him and his family members.

"Criminals killed my brother Mahamud Ani, a Junior Secondary Certificate examinee, on November 30 last year. The men of the

accused in the murder case might have made the arson attack to kill us," said Ashik Mahamud Avi, son of Rabiul.

Police earlier submitted charge sheet against two men in the case for killing Ani. Police arrested one of the two accused while the other went into hiding after the incident.

Family members of the victim submitted an objection regarding the charge sheet and demanded reinvestigation for finding out the mastermind of the murder.

The case was later handed over to Police Bureau of Investigation.

"We are demanding justice for killing my brother. We also demand proper investigation into the arson attack incident," Avi said.

Md Kamruzzaman, officer in charge of Ataikula Police Station, said police has visited the spot and started investigating the incident.

"Although the victims have verbally mentioned the name of a suspect, they have filed a case against anonymous people. We are trying to find out the culprits," he added.



A roller smoothens the ground of Gor-e-Shaheed Boromoydan Eidgah in Dinajpur town yesterday as part of the authorities' preparation to arrange the Eid-ul-Azha congregation there tomorrow. A large number of people from far and near areas come to say Eid prayers at the venue every year.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKE