



Bhukshimoil School and College in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila. Inset, the floor of the institution building's extended part loosens after only a little effort with bare hands as very low quality materials were allegedly used for the work.

PHOTO:STAR

BHUKSHIMOIL SCHOOL & COLLEGE IN KULaura

Locals stop ext work as low quality materials used

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The extension work of Bhukshimoil School and College building in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar has remained stopped amid allegation of using low quality materials. Aggrieved locals stopped the work on October 4 and filed a complaint with signatures of over 100 people to the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) on Thursday. Copies of the complaint were also sent to the local lawmaker, deputy commissioner, upazila parishad chairman, and Anti-Corruption Commission office in Moulvibazar. "Locals stopped the work as there were

widespread irregularities in the work. Rods with lower than the stipulated quality were used in the building work. Instead of chip stones, small amount of cement and sand mixture was used on the floor," said Azizur Rahman Monir, chairman of Bhukshimoil union parishad (UP). "Former UP chairman and general secretary of upazila Awami League (AL) Rafiqul Islam Renu was involved with the work. We demand a departmental inquiry," he said. Locals also observed a human chain recently protesting the use of substandard materials in the construction work. M/S Juber Ahmed got the work order

worth Tk 1 crore 18 lakh 42 thousand for upward expansion (second and third floors) of the existing academic building of Bhukshimoil School and College and building a toilet block within nine months, said officials at the Department of Education Engineering in Moulvibazar. The work was scheduled to start on November 7 last year but the contractor started it in March this year. Contractor Juber Ahmed said, "The work is currently suspended. Cement and sand mixture has been used due to shortage of stones. We will do the work with stones." Abu Saeed Muhammad Rahi, in-

charge of the Department of Education Engineering in Kulaura, confirmed the irregularities and said, "I have told the contractor to do the work according to the schedule." Contacted, Rafiqul Islam Renu, also governing body president of the institution, said, "After hearing the matter, I called the contractor immediately and told him to modify the work. I will bring a defamation suit against those who accused me without knowing." UNO ATM Farhad Chowdhury said, "I have received the complaint. Legal action will be taken after investigation. No excuse will be acceptable on the quality of work."

Kotchandpur UZ to see all EVM polls tomorrow

BNP candidate alleges hindrance by ruling party men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Tomorrow's election to Kotchandpur upazila parishad will be held solely with electronic voting machines (EVM). Election office sources said EVMs will be set up in all the 295 booths of 53 centres in the upazila where 1,08,882 voters will exercise their right to franchise. Three persons are contesting for the upazila chairman post – Awami League (AL) nominated Sharifunnessa Miki, BNP nominated Abdur Razzak and independent candidate Khairul Hossain Sathi. AL backed Abdul Karim, Kamal Hauladar, Rezaul Islam Reza, Riaz Hossain and Shariful Islam, BNP candidate Rostom Kabir and independent candidate Nimay Chandra Dey will contest for two vice chairman posts while AL nominated candidate Rubina Khatun, Pinki Khatun and BNP candidate Nasima Islam will contest for the vice chairman post reserved for women. In the last upazila election in Kotchandpur, Jamaat-e-Islami nominated candidates won the upazila chairman and vice chairman

posts including the one reserved for women but this time they are not contesting. BNP backed candidate Abdur Razzak alleged that there is no level playing field in the upazila as the ruling party activists are creating hindrance to campaign and have vandalized BNP's election office. "Former mayor BNP leader Salauddin Bulbul Sidel has been arrested although he is on bail. Ignoring the rule, Awami League lawmaker Shafikul Azam Khan Chandhal is conducting door to door campaign for the party candidates. They are threatening the BNP voters. I have submitted written allegation to the election officer but to no effect," Razzak said. AL backed candidate Sharifunnessa Miki refuted the allegation, saying, "We are not doing any activity which harms the image of the election. The BNP backed candidates are running their campaign without any hindrance." Kotchandpur Upazila Election Officer Mehedi Hasan said, "There is no situation here to create chaos by any candidate, whether they are from Awami League or BNP. We are working to conduct a free and fair election."



PHOTO:STAR

Prof Mohammad Alauddin, vice-chancellor of Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University in Tangail, inaugurates construction work of a mural of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in front of the university's central library yesterday marking the 20th founding anniversary of the institution.

Two cousins die in hornet attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two minor boys were killed in an attack by a swarm of hornets in Parbatipur upazila of the district yesterday. The deceased are Nishad Islam, 5, son of Belal Hossain, and his cousin Arafat Rahman 6, son of Alamgir Hossain, of Roghobindapur village in the upazila. Hamidpur Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Sadekul Islam said the two kids along with their grandmother were going to one of their relatives' house yesterday morning. When they reached Dhulauldal village a swarm of hornets suddenly attacked them around 10:00am. Family members rescued them and took them to adjacent Phulbari Upazila Health Complex, where the doctors referred them to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. But, instead of taking them to Rangpur, their parents brought them back to their respective homes, where both the kids succumbed to their injuries within an hour, the UP chairman said.

Three kids drown

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Three children, including two siblings, died in separate incidents of drowning in Patuakhali and Jashore yesterday and on Friday, report our correspondents. Two minor brothers drowned in a pond at Bilbilas village in Patuakhali's Baufal upazila around 11:00am yesterday. The deceased, Abdullah, 5, and his young brother Yasin, 3, were sons of Saddam Hossain of the village. Quoting the victims' family members, Officer in Charge of Baufal Police Station Mostafizur Rahman said both the kids went out their house around 9:00am for playing and went missing. After a frantic search, family members and locals rescued their bodies from a pond nearby their house and informed the police, the OC said. Away in Jashore, a two year-old-boy drowned at Rajganj Dighirpar village in Monirampur upazila on Friday. The deceased was identified as Tahsin, son of Mahbub Gazi of the village. Police quoted deceased's family members as saying that the kid accidentally fell into a pond near his house while playing on its bank and drowned. Later, villagers spotted Tahsin's floating body in the pond and rescued it, Officer in Charge of Monirampur Police Station Rafiqul Islam said.

DISPUTE OVER SETTING NETS Man beaten dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A fisherman was beaten to death allegedly by one of his neighbours, centring a feud over setting up fishing nets along the Pona river, in Bhandaria upazila on Friday night. The deceased, Rafikul Howlader, 23, was son of Motaleb Howlader of Laxmipura village in the upazila. Quoting locals, Officer in Charge of Bhandaria Police Station Maksudur Rahman said an altercation took place between Rafikul and another fisherman Abdul Mannan over setting up fishing net along the bank of Pona river on Friday evening. At one stage, Mannan beat up Rafikul mercilessly with stick and left the place. Being informed, divers from Barishal Fire Station went to the spot and recovered the body from the river around 10:00pm.



People crossing the 150-foot-long bamboo bridge on Pochakoralia canal and the 120-foot-long bridge on Ramjir canal, inset, in Taltali upazila of Barguna. PHOTO:STAR

Years pass, sufferings remain

25,000 villagers in Barguna's Amtali upazila using three risky bamboo bridges for long 20 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

When it comes to road communications, a lot has changed in the country over the last 20 years. But more than 25,000 inhabitants, in 16 villages of Barguna's Amtali upazila, still have no other way but use three bamboo bridges built at least 15 years ago over three wide canals. The smallest of the bridges is 100 feet long and the largest one is 150 feet long. The longest one was built 20 years ago by locals on Pochakoralia canal for communications between Pochakoralia union in Taltali upazila and Arpangashia union in Amtali upazila. Jasim Uddin Sikder from Kalarang village under Pochakoralia union said villagers on both sides of the canal built the bridge with their own funds and they have been spending money on its yearly maintenance ever since. Their repeated requests for a concrete bridge on the canal fell on deaf ears, he added. Contacted, Arpangashia Union Parishad

Chairman AKM Nurul Haq said around 15,000 people including students of at least 20 educational institutions, on both sides of the canal, use the bamboo bridge every day. He claimed that on many occasions he requested officials of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) to construct a permanent bridge on the canal and he had raised the issue at upazila development meetings too. A 120-foot long bridge on Ramjir canal was built nearly 15 years ago by residents of Gurudol, Holdia, Chila and Nachnapara villages in Holdia union under Amtali upazila. Now the bridge is used by around 5,000 people including hundreds of students every day. A concrete bridge should be built on the canal as the bamboo bridge is risky for all, especially for school going children, said Chila village resident Ambia Khatun. Mohammad Mamun, member of Holdia Union Parishad, said, the villagers have been suffering immensely and the authorities

concerned should build a concrete bridge there. The third bamboo bridge, 100 feet in length, was also built by locals on Tepura canal, running through Amtali's Holdia union and Champapur union in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali. This risky bridge is the only means of communications for 5,000 inhabitants of the two unions. Arif Billah, a tenth grader, said, "It's quite dangerous to cross the bridge during rainy season when it usually gets slippery." For the sake of schoolchildren and villagers' safety, the authorities need to construct a proper bridge on the canal, said Alam Mollik, headteacher of Tepura Government Primary School. When this correspondent reached Nazrul Islam, LGED engineer in Amtali upazila, and asked what his department was doing to address sufferings of the villagers in the upazila, he said although they currently do not have funds for bridges on the three canals, they would take necessary steps in this regard.