

# Road carpeting damaged within days of repair

Use of substandard materials alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Carpeting got damaged and potholes have developed only a few days after completion of the work on one-km-long Bishnathpur-Gouripur road in Juri upazila of Moulvibazar.

Following tender, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) gave Tk 45 lakh work order to contractor Noman Ahmed for the carpeting of the road and he started the work on November 28, 2017, LGED sources said.

As per schedule, May 25, 2018, was the deadline for completion of the work but the contractor failed to do the work in time.

Later contractor Kamal Hosain got work order for the 196-metre portion at the end of the road at Gauripur and completed the work in four days from last October 10 to 13.

But the carpeting has already started getting removed due to use of cheap bitumen, locals said, adding that the carpeting was done with 10 to 15 millimetres of thickness instead of scheduled 25 millimetres.

"The contractor threatened us when we protested it," said a local.

"This road is already getting damaged in such a way that it is not suitable for pedestrians, let alone vehicles. Re-carpeting of the main road and adjoining other lanes is essential to mitigate sufferings of thousands of people of Bishnathpur and

Gouripur, including school and college students," said Jasim Uddin, a resident of Bishnathpur.

Hazi Masum Reza, chairman of Zaifarnagar Union Parishad, said he visited the road and found the allegation true.

Later, he raised the issue at the monthly law and order meeting of the upazila parishad.

Engineer Kamruzzaman, president of Kulaura upazila unit of Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh, said such damage to road carpeting is caused due to fault in work, including use of low grade materials.

This correspondent tried several times to get contractor Kamal Hossain on his mobile for his version but he did not receive the calls.

Zakir Hossain Khan, sub assistant engineer of Juri upazila LGED, claimed that the work was done according to the procedure.

"As per schedule, the thickness of the road carpeting was to be 25 millimetres. However, it may be a bit more or less at one or two places," he added.

MA Moid Faruk, chairman of Juri Upazila Parishad, said, "After receiving complaints from locals, I visited the road and found irregularities in the work. We will call a meeting of the upazila parishad and ask the contractor to do the work again as per schedule."



The newly completed carpeting of Bishnathpur-Gouripur road in Juri upazila of Moulvibazar gets removed with bare hands, bearing testimony to the low quality work. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Char people deprived of shelter

Houses built under Ashrayan project are in ramshackle condition for years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Flood shelters and cluster villages built under Ashrayan project along the Teesta river basin in Sundarganj upazila has been lying in ramshackle condition for long due to lack of proper maintenance, causing immense sufferings to homeless destitute char people.

Moreover, shelter houses remain under three to four feet of water during the recent flood and due to this, the inmates of the houses were compelled to shift to safer places. On the other hand, many houses were devoured by the river.

Apart from this, local influential

people grabbed a number of dwellings and the shelter houses were then kept under lock and key.

River erosion is a common phenomenon in Tarapur, Belka, Haripur, Chandipur, Kapasia and Sreepur unions of the upazila, rendering many families homeless every year.

Vast tract of croplands also went into the river every year, said locals.

Many flood shelters and cluster villages built in low-lying areas fall victim to flood and river erosion every year and due to this, the destitute char people fell in great trouble, said residents of char Belka.

According to the upazila project implementation office, 13 shelter houses, 10 cluster villages and three flood shelters were built under the Ashrayan project ten to 15 years back for the accommodation of poor and destitute shelter-less char people.

All such houses are now in ramshackle condition due to lack of proper maintenance, said the char people.

Rafiqul Islam, a resident of Kapasia union, said the tin-shed houses got nearly damaged for lack of proper maintenance.

As big leakages developed on corrugated iron (CI) sheets, it

became difficult staying inside during the rainy season, he said.

Nafiul Islam Jimmy, chairman of Haripur union parishad, said the houses built under the project are not fit for use now as no repair work was done since its construction.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Solaiman Ali said the damaged shelter houses in char areas would be repaired through local arrangement.

Meanwhile, 43 destitute families have recently got disaster-resilient houses in the upazila and more shelter-less families would be brought under this programme, said the UNO.



Shelter houses under Ashrayan project built at Bangla Bazar in Haripur union of Gaibandha's Sundarganj upazila have got badly damaged due to erosion by the Teesta river.

PHOTO: STAR

# Tortured fisherman lands in hospital

The victim said he faced wrath for giving TV interview on irregularities in leasing water bodies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Criminals beat up a fishermen's association leader in Gobindaganj upazila allegedly over giving interview with a television channel on corrupt practices in leasing water bodies.

The incident took place at Kocharshahar on Saturday.

The victim Shambhu Majhee, president of Mohimaganj Matsyajibi Samity, is undergoing treatment at Gaibandha Sadar Hospital.

Demanding justice and punishment of the attackers, members of the association brought out a protest procession at Mohimaganj Bazar and formed a human chain there on Saturday afternoon.

Talking to this correspondent at hospital, Shambhu said Shaheen, Ramjan, Anwar and a few others attacked and beat him mercilessly,

causing severe injuries. Locals rescued him and sent to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital.

"A section of ruling party men take lease of water bodies from the authorities concerned and later hand those over to members of fishermen's association members under sub-lease in exchange of high amounts, whereas we have all the rights to lease water bodies directly from the administration," he said.

"As I exposed the irregularities in leasing water bodies in an interview with Talash programme of Independent Television on October 4, the vested interest group became furious and attacked me," Shambhu said.

AKM Mebedi Hasan, officer in charge of Gobindaganj Police Station, said, "Police arrested three people in this connection. Investigation is on and we are trying to arrest others involved in the attack on Shambhu,"

# Two women among 3 found dead

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Two women and a man were found dead in Bandarban, Faridpur and Jashore yesterday and the day before.

Police recovered the body of a woman from her husband's house in Bandarban's Lama upazila early yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Golapi Begum, 45, wife of Shahjahan of Chiuni Khal para area in the upazilla. She was the mother of four-year-old girl.

Oppela Raju Naha, officer-in-charge (OC) of Lama Police Station, said on information, police recovered the body and sent it to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Mintu Kumar Sen, chairman of Lama Sadar Union Parishad, alleged that Shahjahan killed his wife following an altercation over a family issue.

In Faridpur, police recovered the hanging body of a housewife from their rented house at Baburchar Adarsha village in Sadarpur upazila on Saturday, reports our correspondent.

The victim was identified as Shikha Akter, 21, wife of Idris Talukdar of Char Brahmandi village.

Police detained tailor Idris for interrogation.

OC Syed Lutfar Rahman of Sadarpur Police Station said informed by the victim's husband, they recovered the hanging body of Shikha from the house around 11:00pm and sent it to Faridpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

An unnatural death case was filed in this connection, said the police official.

According to our Benapole correspondent, police recovered the throat-slit body of a man from a water-tank at Guakhola village in Jashore's Abhainagar upazila on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Habibur Rahman, 40, son of Abdul Aziz Khan of Barishal district.

The victim's brother Yusuf Ali said Habibur went missing since Friday.

The body was sent to Jashore General Hospital for autopsy, said police.

# Drug addict kills mother

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Police yesterday arrested a youth for allegedly killing his mother over a trifling matter in Bagerhat town the same day.

Police detained Russell Mallik, 25, from Bashabati area of the town.

The deceased, Rabeya Mallik, 50, was wife of Shahjahan Mallik of the area.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said an altercation occurred between Rabeya and Russell, a drug addict, and the latter asked for money to buy a mobile phone set and Rabeya refused him.

At one stage, Russell stabbed his mother with a knife indiscriminately, killing her on the spot, Officer in Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Mahatab Uddin quoted locals as saying.

On information, police went to the spot and detained Russell from the spot.

# Trader stabbed dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Unidentified criminals stabbed a trader to death near his house in Baufal upazila on Saturday night.

The deceased, Siddique Sharif, 55, son of Aijuddin Sharif of Sabupura village, used to run a grocery shop at Sabupura Bazar.

Quoting local people, police said an unidentified gang waylaid Siddique while he was returning home from his shop around 8:00pm and stabbed him indiscriminately.

Hearing screams, locals rescued the victim and took him to Baufal Upazila health Complex, where the doctors declared him dead.

# Hilsa fishing rampant in Patuakhali amid ban

Mobile courts seize 8.24 lakh metres of fishing nets, jail 90

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Catching of hilsa is going on in all upazilas of Patuakhali although there is a 22-day ban in force against catching of the country's most sought-after fish.

A large number of fishers have been out in the rivers -- especially the Tentulia, Ramnabad, Buragourango and Payra -- at night, while many others have been fishing even in the daytime.

Yesterday around noon, at least five fishing boats were spotted netting hilsa in the Tentulia river near Nimdee area of Baufal's Dhulia union.

More fishing boats were seen catching the fish in Barodalima and Chandradwip areas of the same upazila. The scene was similar in Banshbaria area under Dashmina upazila.

A Nimdee resident said the fishers have been selling four pieces of hilsa for Tk 600 to Tk 1,000 and many of them are making door to door sales.

Fisherman Shah Alam from

Banshbaria area said, "I've got monthly instalment payment for a loan that I took from an NGO. I can't help fishing hilsa defying the ban as I have a family to support and there's no other alternative."

The government should forbid the NGOs and banks from making the borrowers repay loans during the fishing ban, he also said.

Zakir Hossain, another fisherman from Dashpara area in Baufal upazila, echoed the same.

Banshbaria Union Parishad Chairman Altaf Hossain said the government should take measures so the NGOs and banks do not collect payments against loans taken by fishers during the fishing bans.

Contacted, Mohammad Badol, coordinator of a local NGO, said they do not force fishers to repay loans and they would take it into consideration if any of the fishers approached the NGO, seeking exemption from payment obligations during the fishing ban.

Meanwhile, the fisheries department, assisted by the local administration, have been conducting raids against violators of the hilsa fishing ban.

As of yesterday, since the hilsa fishing ban commenced on October 9, the department and the administration carried out a total of 171 raids against violators of the ban in different parts of Patuakhali and seized 8.24 lakh metres fishing nets, with an estimated value of Tk 1.66 crore, according to sources at the fisheries department in Patuakhali.

So far, 2,195 kilograms of hilsa were seized, 90 fishermen were given jail sentences, Tk 1.90 lakh was collected in fines and 136 cases were filed during 92 raids carried out by mobile courts in the district.

Patuakhali District Fisheries Officer Molla Emdadullah said they have been maintaining a vigilant watch to protect mother hilsa during the ban.

The hilsa fishing ban will end on October 30.



A fisherman holds his catch in the Tentulia river yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR