



This section of the approach road to Barkhapon bridge on the Gonai river in Netrakona's Kalmakanda sustained damage more than a year ago. The authorities concerned are yet to repair it. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Thousands await repair of damaged road for years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Flash floods from upstream damaged approach roads of two bridges years ago -- first one four years ago while the other over a year ago, but the authorities concerned are yet to take any steps to relieve sufferings of thousands.

Both the bridges are on Barkhapon-Gutura road in Barkhapon union under Kalmakanda upazila of Netrakona. The road leads to Netrakona district headquarters through Thakurakona.

AKM Hadisuzzaman Hadis, chairman of Barkhapon Union Parishad, told this correspondent that the road is used every day by around 15,000 inhabitants of a number of unions in Kalmakanda upazila, Asma and Chiram unions in Barhatta upazila and Paikoraty and Madhyannagar

unions in Dharamapasha upazila of Sunamganj.

At least 400 students of different educational institutions use the unsafe approach roads to cross the bridges every day, said Kajal Talukder, a human rights activist from Ranagaon village.

The approach road to 40-foot-long Ranagaon bridge, built in 1995 over Ranagaon canal, was damaged about four years ago, said Akkas Mia, a member of Barkhapon Union Parishad.

A section of the other approach road, connecting 60-metre-long Barkhapon bridge on the Gonai river, sustained damage more than a year ago, the chairman of Barkhapon Union Parishad said.

"We asked officials at Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) a

number of times to repair the approach road, but no steps were taken yet [in this regard]," he added.

The bridge had a price tag of around Tk 3 crore when it was constructed in 2011 under 'Haor Infrastructure and Livelihood Improvement Project' of LGED.

Many locals speaking with this correspondent expressed frustration over the LGED officials' callous indifference to the plight of the people.

Johirul Haque Jibon, president of Awami League's Barkhapon union unit, said thanks to the dilapidated condition of the approach roads, heavier vehicles can no longer cross the bridges.

Aside from the approach roads, four bridges, including Barkhapon and Ranagaon, on Barkhapon-Gutura road are

also in a run-down state.

The other two risky bridges are on Udaypur and Joypur canals, said Barkhapon Union Parishad Member Akkas Mia.

Contacted, Imran Hossain, LGED sub-assistant engineer in Kalmakanda, said out of the four risky bridges, only Barkhapon bridge is under the LGED while the other three were constructed under different projects.

Kalmakanda Upazila Nirbahi Officer Zakir Hossain said he was aware of the poor state the bridges were in.

They were awaiting final approval of an LGED priority project, under which the four bridges would be reconstructed and the road would be widened, he also said.

Elderly couple living in cowshed for a month

They were evicted from their house after their only son secretly sold their house and left the village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Cheated by their only son, an elderly couple have been staying in their neighbour's cowshed in Rangabali upazila for a month now.

Around three months earlier, their son Mohammad Hasan tricked them into handing over all their property on 40 decimals of land in Kawkhali village of the upazila.

The couple -- Shukkur Dewan, 70, and Sahura Begum, 65 -- realised of their son's deception only a month ago when Hasan left home secretly and Shukkur's brother Tajem Ali Dewan evicted them from their house, claiming that Hasan had sold all their property, including their agricultural land, to Tajem.

Since then, a neighbour sheltered Shukkur and Sahura in a cowshed. With all their four daughters married off and no other family member to care for them, their neighbours have been providing food to them.

According to locals, Hasan took his father to Galachipa upazila town around three months ago for treatment as Shukkur had been suffering from various illnesses for past few months.

Instead of taking illiterate Shukkur to any medical facility, Hasan took his father to the land registration office in the town and convinced him to give thumbprints on a number of documents, saying that those were necessary for his treatment, they said.

With tears rolling down his cheeks, Shukkur said, "We are now living in a neighbour's cowshed after my son robbed me of all my property. But we once had a happy family."

"Don't even know where he [Hasan] went. Wish someone could tell me his whereabouts," the old man sighed.

Hasan left for Dhaka with his wife and does not have contact with any of the villagers, said locals.

Local union parishad Chairman ABM Abdul Mannan said he came to learn about the old couple's plight recently from a journalist and he would enlist them in the recipients' list of the government old age allowance.

Expressing his regret over the incident, Rangabali Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mashfaquur Rahman said he would take urgent steps so a sheltered accommodation and other necessary assistance are provided to the senior citizens.

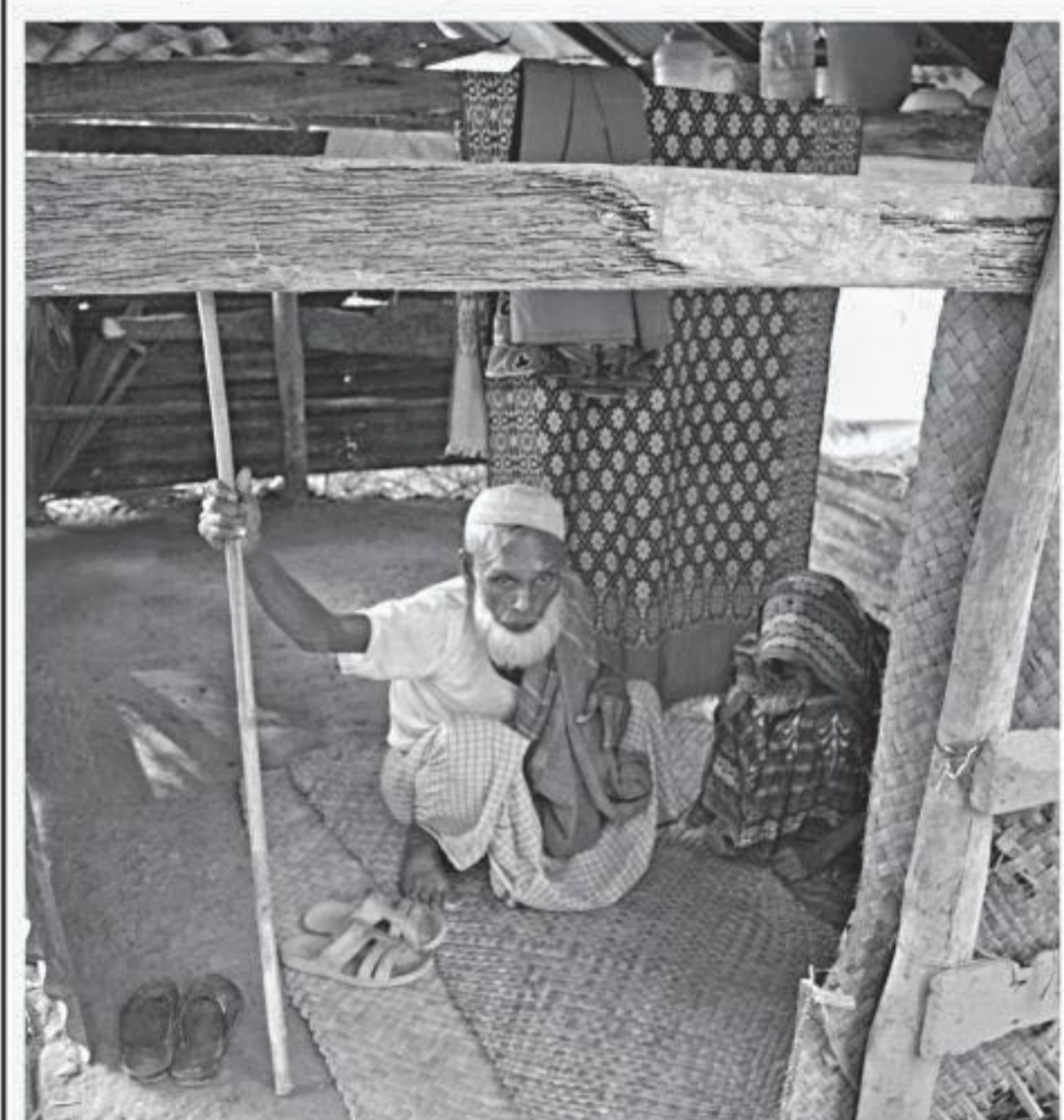


PHOTO: STAR

Shukkur Dewan and Sahura Begum in the neighbour's cowshed at Kawkhali village in Rangabali upazila.



This ferry at Kazirtak terminal in Madaripur Sadar upazila is decaying as it has remained unused since a bridge was built on the Arial Kha river over four years ago. Three pontoons at the terminal are also rotting due to the same reason, thanks to the callousness of the authorities concerned.

PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

'Save my land from illegal occupiers'

Late FF's widow urges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Widow of a freedom fighter has sought help for recovery of her late husband's land at Neamatpur under ward No 8 of Saidpur municipality in Nilphamari from alleged illegal occupiers.

"My husband freedom fighter Solaiman Ali Basunia, a petty employee of Saidpur railway workshop, bought a seven-decimal plot in 2012 at Neamatpur in municipality from one Suhrwardi Alam," Solaiman's widow Minara Begum, 52, said in a written complaint filed with Saidpur Police Station on October 15.

"A few months after the purchase, he died of a cardiac arrest. I and my three children are living in an abandoned railway quarter at Puratan Babupara amid hardship.

"On October 14 this year, my son Sourav Basunia, 25, got the plot measured

with a surveyor and erected bamboo poles on the boundary line marking the plot.

"On the same night, owners of adjacent plots Salauddin Mia, 50, and Abul Kashem, 45, also a labour directorate employee, with a group uprooted the poles and encircled the area with corrugated iron sheets and started building a makeshift house," goes the complaint.

Minara said she informed upazila Muktijoddha Sangsad leaders of the matter and at their suggestion filed a complaint with Saidpur Police Station the next day.

"After getting the complaint, police rushed to the spot and stopped construction work by the accused. The feuding parties have been asked to come to the police station with respective documents at a time convenient for both," said Shahjahan Pasha, OC of the police station.

Asked by this correspondent, accused Abul Kashem said, "As per latest Bangladesh land survey record, the plot belonged to us and we had developed it by filling with earth. But our opponent is claiming it through creating a sentiment."

On the other hand, complainant Minara Begum said her husband's land purchase document clearly mentioned the plot number, location and boundary of the land.

Upazila unit commander of Muktijoddha Sangsad Ekramul Huque condemned the evil design to grab the late freedom fighter's land and requested police to take stern action against the accused.

Police inspector Ataur Rahman, who is investigating the matter, said they had directed the accused to remove all construction materials from the disputed land.

2 crushed under train in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two people were crushed under a train while they were crossing an unmanned level crossing near Bangabandhu Bridge in Tangail's Kalihati upazila on Wednesday night.

The deceased are SM Rokonzaman, 48, a sub-assistant livestock officer in Kalihati upazila and a resident of Ratanpur village under Ghatail upazila in the district, and Rabindra Chandra, 52, a sales representative of a veterinary pharmaceuticals company and a resident of Munshiganj district, said police.

Dr Mohammad Shahidullah, upazila livestock officer in Kalihati, said Rokon along with Rabindra was going to a house in Analiabari area in the upazila for treating sick cattle.

The two died on the spot as a train hit their motorcycle while they were passing the level crossing in Hatia area around 11:00am, he said.

Being informed, family members recovered their bodies and took them to their houses, he added.

Youth hacked to death in sleep

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A man was hacked to death at his house in Bhatta village of Kishoreganj's Katiadi upazila on Wednesday.

The victim was identified as Habibur Rahman, 35, son of late Moti Mia of the village. He was the father of two children.

Quoting the family members and neighbours, Officer-in-Charge of Katiadi Police Station MA Jalil said there had been a longstanding conflict between Habibur and his cousin Al Amin over a piece of land.

As a sequel to the conflict, Al Amin along his five accomplices allegedly swooped on the house of Habibur on Wednesday midnight and hacked him indiscriminately when he was in sleep.

Hearing screams, family members and locals rushed to the spot to rescue Habibur but the criminals also hacked two neighbours -- Tofa Chand, 30, and Junayed Ahmed, 55--leaving them injured at the time. The gang later fled the scene.

Habibur died on the way to Jahurul Islam Medical College Hospital, said the OC.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Kishoreganj General Hospital for autopsy.

They were raiding different areas to arrest the accused, said the police official.

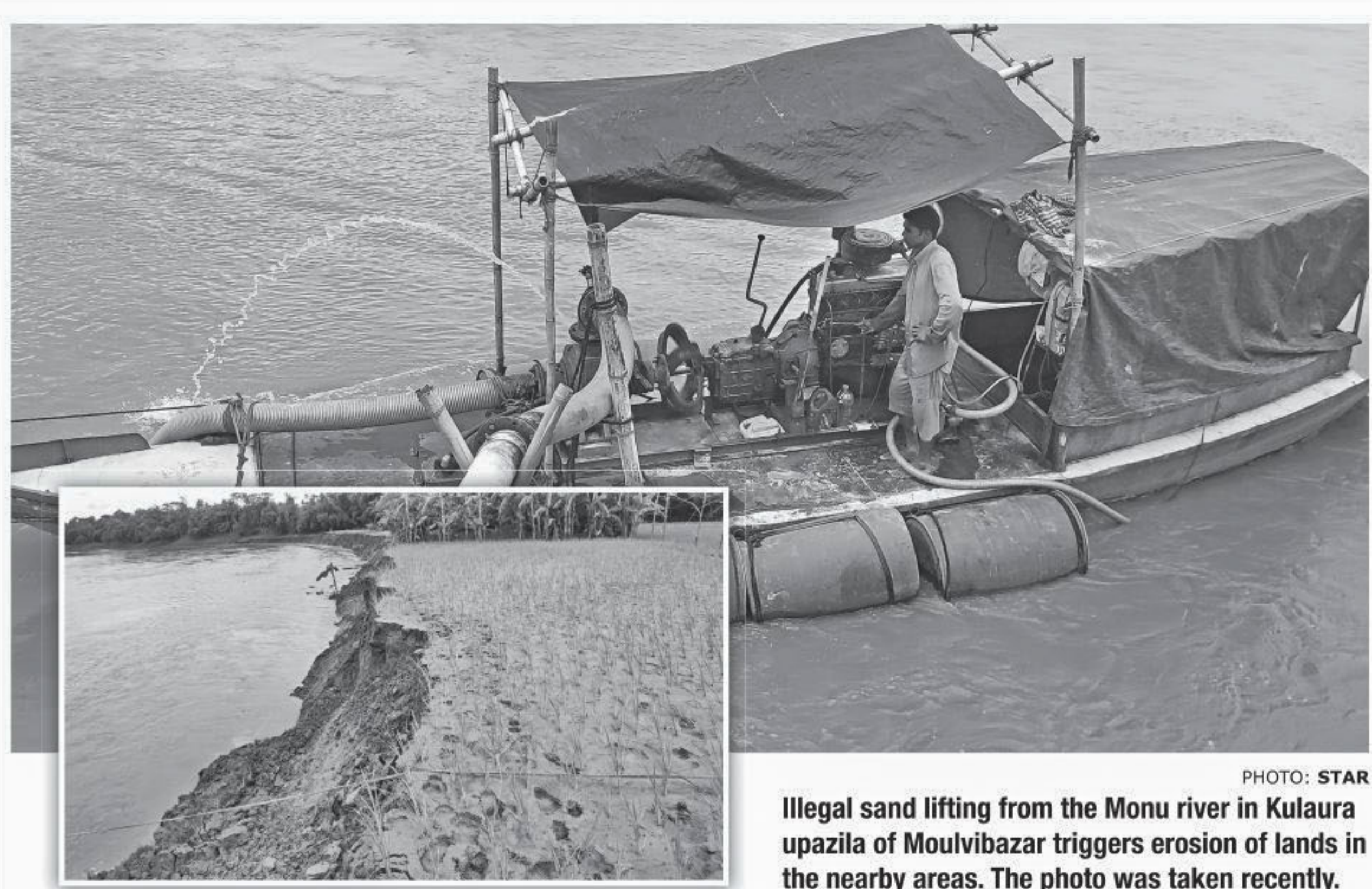


PHOTO: STAR

Illegal sand lifting from the Monu river in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar triggers erosion of lands in the nearby areas. The photo was taken recently.