



This culvert at West Golabari under Golabari union in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila fails to facilitate vehicular movement as the earthen road on either side have not been made usable for vehicles.

PHOTO:
STAR

Culvert lies useless for yrs

Vehicles can't reach the bridge for want of approach road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A culvert at West Golabari, three kilometres from Khagrachhari-Rangamati road in Khagrachhari town is lying virtually useless since its construction in 2012 as suitable approach roads have not been made for vehicular movement. Meanwhile, the structure has slightly subsided.

The culvert was made with fund from the Ministry of Relief and Disaster Management to facilitate communication between Khagrachhari Sadar to Khedapara, which is situated at the foot of Alutilla Hill, said Gyana Ranjan Tripura, chairman of Golabari Union Parishad.

"There was a plan to widen the earthen road on either side of the culvert but it was not done. The road, broken at places, remains unfit for vehicular movement," he said.

As per government circular, project implementation officer (PIO) of the upazila supervises the planning and construction of such culverts in rural areas.

"Fourteen families living in Khedachara Para use the rural road. But the culvert didn't come to any use for them as vehicles could not be run there even for a single day," said Asim Kumar Tripura, 35, a resident of West Golabari.

Kazi Masudur Rahman, PIO of Khagrachhari Sadar upazila, said, "After receiving information, I visited the culvert at West Golabari. The culvert looks like others of the kind, which were funded by the Ministry of Relief and Disaster Management. But I did not find any documents at the office regarding the culvert."

Initiative will be taken to renovate the culvert and make the road usable for vehicles, he added.

Man who cheated death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Amzad Hossain is one of the 13 who survived after their fishing boat capsized on Sunday, they day after Cyclone Bulbul made landfall.

A crew of 24 men were headed for their homes in Char Fashion upazila of Bhola after selling their catch at Chandpur fish market.

Before setting sail around 6 in the morning, they all asked the boat owner not to make them go out in the choppy seas. But he did not pay heed.

With two of them at the boat's controls, other 22 went to sleep in the berths inside the boat's hull. Soon enough, monotonous thumping and bumping of waves put them in deep sleep.

Amzad's ten years of experience at the sea came into play when he suddenly woke up with water all around and his boat turned upside down.

The 28-year-old youth remained calm and tried to open his berth's hatch that was now under water. But he failed to open the hatch.

Having to get into seawater to untangle fishing nets many times before, Amzad did not give up hope. This time he tried harder and he finally made it out of the berth by kicking the hatch open.

Swimming out of the hull, he found the boat barely floating amid huge waves and strong winds. He climbed up on its keel, now facing the sky, to locate its position. "I saw at least a hundred storms while fishing in the deep sea, where waves resemble mountains, but never had I met with such an accident," Amzad said.

Sensing that the boat was going to sink in no time, Amzad then jumped into the water and started to swim towards the shoreline. Before jumping into the strong waves, he took off all his clothes that might slow him down or even drown him.

It was around 1:00pm when Amzad swam ashore. He was told that he reached the bank of Tentulia river in Rajapur village of Bhola Sadar upazila.

After locals brought him clothes and

some food, he told them that he had to rescue his fellow fishermen who might still be in the capsized boat. They helped him make phone calls to his relatives at his home village of Abdullahpur in Char Fashion.

His relatives along with several fishermen arrived in Rajapur within a few hours and by around 4:00pm, they sailed out in a rented fishing boat to rescue Amzad's comrades who perished in the same river near Bahadurpur village of Barishal's Mehendiganj upazila.

Their rescue mission, however, had to be aborted as the coast guard, police and officials from the local administration



insisted that civilians would not be allowed to conduct rescue missions for safety reasons.

"The coast guard, police and officials from the local administration were at Chandpur ghat [on Sunday] too, but no one stopped us from making the voyage in the boat," Amzad said.

"We've got no choice. Our lives are tied to the hands of the boat owners and we always have to follow their wish. If the boat owner didn't force us to go to the sea, all the ten lives could've been saved," he lamented.

Rescue workers later found ten bodies of the crew inside the capsized fishing boat. Amzad and 12 others came out of the boat alive while one of them still remains missing.

PATGRAM-DAHAGRAM ROAD RENOVATION

Illegal felling of roadside trees causes concern

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Illegal felling of roadside green trees continues, allegedly by the auction winner for 1200 trees prior to renovation of Patgram-Dahagram road at Dahagram union in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila, much to the grievance of nearby villagers.

Locals said around 15 thousand trees, including mahogany, akashmoni and different fruit trees, adorned both sides of the 18-kilometre road with greenery and provided shed to locals, pedestrians and tourists to Tin Bigha Corridor area.

Recently, forest department auctioned 742 out of 5,000 roadside trees under their jurisdiction and the zila parishad auctioned 458 out of another 5,000 trees under their supervision, as the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) is going to start renovation work of Patgram-Dahagram road, said officials concerned.

Locals alleged that Forman Ali, who got the auction order to fell the 1200 trees, is getting many unauthorised trees felled while the authorities are not taking any action.

"Forman felled roadside green trees, including the ones that are not marked as auctioned by zila parishad and forest department. Our protest fell into deaf ears while the authorities seem reluctant to take any action," said Fazle Rahman, 55, of Panbari village.

"We don't understand why many trees, which were at safe distances from the road, have been felled," said Nazrul Islam, 62, at Dahagram village.

"As the bidder's men continued to fell roadside green trees outside auction, I informed the authorities concerned of the matter but no step has been taken yet," said Kamal Hossain, chairman of Dahagram Union Parishad.

Contacted, Forman Ali said his hired labourers are working to fell 1200 trees beside



Workers fell trees beside Patgram-Dahagram road at Dahagram union in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila a few days ago.

PHOTO:
STAR

Dahagram road, following auction of forest department and zila parishad.

"Around 60 percent of the specified trees have been felled in last one month. I'm not felling any roadside trees outside the auction," he said.

Patgram Upazila Forest Officer Badsha Miah said forest department auctioned 742 dried, risky roadside trees ahead of the RHD's road renovation work.

"The auctioned trees were marked for felling.

Forest department will take legal action if the bidder fells any tree outside the auction order," he said.

"The zila parishad auctioned 458 such trees. Our assistant remains vigilant during felling of the trees by the bidder. Action will be taken if he is found guilty of felling unauthorised trees," said Abdul Quader Siddique, assistant engineer in charge of the zila parishad's roadside tree maintenance work.

MISAPPROPRIATION OF VGD RICE

Govt officials, UP chairman arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Members of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in Dinajpur yesterday arrested five government officials and a union parishad (UP) chairman in Thakurgaon on charge of embezzling six tonnes of rice under Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme through forgery.

The arrestees are Nirmal Kumar Barman, chairman of Dholahat UP in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, Golam Kibria, project implementation officer (PIO) in the upazila, Biplob Kumar Singh Roy, food control officer in Thakurgaon Sadar, Maidul Islam, in-charge of Gorerhat Food Warehouse, Shabuddin Ahmed, in-charge of Sadar Food Warehouse, and SM Golam Kibria, in-charge of Shibganj Food Warehouse.

Abu Hena Ashiqur Rahman, deputy director (DD) of ACC in Dinajpur, said the market price of the rice was Tk 2.38 lakh.

The arrestees were later produced before a court in Thakurgaon, said the DD.



Unscrupulous traders extract earth from different places on the Surma river for sale to owners of brick kilns and realtors, posing risk of erosion in the nearby areas. The photo was taken from Gowaipara in Sylhet city yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKHNASIR

Idols of another Hindu temple vandalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Miscreants vandalised all five idols of the Kali temple of local Modon Mohon Nath's family at Bangra Jugibari village in Tangail's Kalihati upazila early hours yesterday.

This incident, following Wednesday's similar occurrence at a Kali temple of nearby Silimpur Uttar Senbari village, caused grievance among the minority Hindu community in the area.

Sudip Kumar Dutta, president of Puja Uddhayan Parishad in Kalihati, said they found all five idols broken inside the temple early in the morning and informed the police and civil administration officials.

Bitter disappointment has been prevailing among the Hindu community people in the area over vandalism at two temples one after another, he said.

Md Ahaduzzaman Miah, additional superintendent of police (ASP-Crime), Rasel Monir, assistant superintendent of police (Kalihati Circle), Sazzad Hossain, officer-in-charge of Detective Branch (North) of police in Tangail, Kalihati Upazila Parishad Chairman Ansar Ali and Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shamim Ara Nipa visited the spot.

"We suspect that vandalism in the two temples were committed as part of a conspiracy to damage communal harmony in the area," ASP Ahaduzzaman Miah told this correspondent.

Police have started investigating the matter seriously and action will be taken against the perpetrators, he said.

Earlier on Wednesday morning, miscreants vandalised five idols at a Kali temple of Silimpur Uttar Senbari village, only a kilometre away.

Protish Chandra Sen, president of Silimpur Kali Temple Committee, filed a case against unidentified criminals with Kalihati Police Station the same day, said Hasan Al Mamun, officer-in-charge of Kalihati Police Station.