



A village road in Jhalakathi's Rajapur upazila lies in awful state for years, causing immense sufferings to commuters. PHOTO: STAR

## Jhalakathi villagers suffer for over a decade

The 1.5 kilometre road in Rajapur upazila lies in awful condition since it was hit by super cyclone Sidr in 2007

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Carrying his ailing mother in his arms, Abu Alam had to walk about one kilometre to reach Rajapur Upazila Health Complex due to a damaged village road.

The one-and-half km road at Gopalpur in Rajapur upazila lies in awful state since it was hit by super cyclone Sidr in 2007, causing immense sufferings to commuters of five villages.

Especially critical patients and students of different educational institutions are the worst

sufferers due to the bad condition of the road, said locals.

The villages are Pargopalpur, Gopalpur, Sangor, Suktagar and Jagyrhat.

Rafizuddin, a farmer of Gopalpur village, said due to the damaged road, they have to face immense problem to bring their agricultural products to markets in the upazila and district headquarters.

Rana, a student of Rajapur Government College, said "I have to walk to go to my college. Even I can't use my bicycle on the road as a number of potholes have developed

on the road."

Despite repeated pleas, the authorities concerned are yet to take any steps to repair the road, said villagers.

Mojibul Haque Mridha, chairman of Suktagar union parishad, said a tender will be floated soon to renovate the road.

Md Golam Mostofa, engineer of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Rajapur, said he joined here recently. Yet immediate steps will be taken to repair the road.

## Resilience wins her Joyeeta Award

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Jatri Rani Barman, an auto-rickshaw driver, has won the Joyeeta Award in Sunamganj under the category 'resilience against violence on women'.

She is among the five women who received crest of honour under different categories at a programme at district Shilpakala Academy on Monday marking the Begum Rokeya Day and two week-long activism following International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Sunamganj Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mohammad Abdul Ahad handed over the crests at the event organised by the district office of Women and Children Affairs Directorate in collaboration with the district administration.

Jatri got the award in recognition for her starting a new life, leaving behind a past with long-time abuse by husband.

"I married a man of Sunamganj town following an affair 20 years ago. But happiness eluded me as he started torturing me shortly afterwards," said the 39-year-old woman.

"When the time for delivery of my eldest son neared, my husband did not even accompany me to hospital. I went to hospital alone and returned home with the newborn. Later two other kids



were born to us.

"As my husband did not work regularly, I decided to earn and learned how to drive auto-rickshaw," Jatri said.

Early this year, she started living separately from her husband.

"I started driving auto-rickshaw on March 8 this year and continued the work. With the earning I maintain myself and my three children, who live with me," she said.

Expressing happiness over the award, Jatri said, "Such honour will encourage women to stand against abuse and work for materialising their own dream."

The government enacted many laws, rules and regulations for protection of women and children and is working to implement those properly, DC Abdul Ahad said in his speech at the award giving programme.



Joyeeta Award winner Jatri Rani Barman runs battery-run auto-rickshaw in Sunamganj to maintain herself and three children, having said goodbye to abuse by husband. PHOTO: COLLECTED



While a passenger stands bemusedly at Shambhuganj bridge bus counters in Mymensingh city, a woman checks with a transport worker about the possibility of resumption of bus services. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon, before the bus owners called off the strike. PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Bus services resume on Dhaka-M'singh, 3 other dist routes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

After keeping their vehicles off the road for the second consecutive day, resulting in a suspension of communications with the capital via Mymensingh city, bus owners in Mymensingh and three other districts called off their strike last evening.

The decision was made around 8:30pm yesterday evening at the assurance of settling the matter owners and leaders of the transport sector in Mymensingh said adding that they would elaborate on their decision after today's meeting of the Regional Transport Committee (RTC).

RTC Chairman and Mymensingh Deputy Commissioner Mizanur Rahman is scheduled to preside over the meeting at 12 noon today.

Mymensingh district motor owners' association enforced the indefinite strike from Monday afternoon over an alleged assault on several of their transport workers by staffers of Bangladesh Road Transport

Corporation (BRTC), the state-owned transport service operator.

Ali Hossain, joint secretary of Mymensingh district motor vehicle workers' union also confirmed the decision made by the bus owners.

Mahbubur Rahman, secretary of the bus owners' association, claimed that the incident took place around 11:00am on Monday at bus counters of private bus operators near Shambhuganj bridge in Mymensingh city.

After two BRTC buses from Netrakona made stops at the counters, the workers of the private operators locked in an altercation with BRTC staffers and at one stage the BRTC staffers "assaulted" some of their workers, he also claimed.

After visiting the spot, the owners' association leaders decided to go on an indefinite strike for bus services operating between Dhaka and Mymensingh as well as services to and from Sherpur, Netrakona and

Kishoreganj districts via Mymensingh city, Mahabur added.

Several passengers who found themselves stranded at Shambhuganj bridge bus counters yesterday told this correspondent that the general public usually prefer BRTC to private operators for affordable fares and better vehicles and that might be the reason behind the hostility of private operators towards BRTC.

Many others said although the private transport operators have been making people hostage for their own gains for a long time, there seems to be no one to stop them from causing such recurring sufferings to people.

Holding her five-year old son's hand, Arifa Akter was also looking for a transport to Haluaghat upazila at the Shambhuganj bridge bus counters. Finding no bus, she was pondering whether she should hire a CNG-run auto-rickshaw at a fare that is three to four times costlier.

## 10 going on 'pleasure trip'

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and Biman have been unnecessarily included in the delegation.

Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam said Biman should avoid such misuse of public money.

Recently, the Biman Board of Directors decided to go for cost-cutting measures but the board members themselves are now making a costly unnecessary visit to the US, said a Biman official.

Chairman of the Biman Board of Directors Air Marshal (ret'd) Muhammad Enamul Bari told this newspaper that the delegation members would have a free flight home as they would return in the new planes.

Asked why the other 10 officials were going, he said officials of the finance, law, and power ministries were involved in the purchase process of the planes.

Biman Managing Director and CEO Mokabbir Hossain claimed that no irrelevant people had been included in the delegation.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mohibul Haq, secretary to the civil aviation ministry, said the number of delegation members who went to get the four 787-8s earlier were higher

than the number going now.

The delegation members would start leaving Dhaka from tomorrow and the last one would leave on December 17. The first 787-9 is scheduled to land in Dhaka on December 21 and second one on December 24.

On November 17, Biman and the US aircraft manufacturer announced at the Dubai Airshow that Biman bought two 787-9 Dreamliners.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was at the airshow, named the planes "Sonar Tori" and "Achin Pakhi."

Mohibul claimed that the price of a 298-seater Boeing 787-9 was around \$300 million but Biman got two planes for around \$284 million, which is less than half price.

Biman got the aircraft at such a low price because China Hainan Airlines, which had ordered those, failed to take delivery due to financial issues and a trade war between China and US, said sources in Biman.

With the inclusion of the 787-9s, Biman would have 18 aircraft in its fleet. The 787-9s would be able to carry 27 more passengers than the 787-8s Biman already has.

## Joy Bangla

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War in 1971.

Even some poets, litterateurs, and intellectuals of the then West Pakistan had chanted the slogan and they were arrested and sent to jail in 1971.

The bench said when the Pakistan occupation force opened fire on freedom fighters during the war, they embraced death chanting the slogan.

Bashar supported the petition and told the court that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had finished his historic March 7 speech with "Joy Bangla", which is now a part of the constitution.

Following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Bashir Ahmed, another HC bench on December 4, 2017, issued the rule asking the government to explain as to why "Joy Bangla" should not be declared the national slogan.

In the petition, the lawyer mentioned that "Joy Bangla" was the slogan of freedom fighters and people of Bangladesh during the Liberation War.

"Joy Bangla was the slogan of our independence and the national unity, and therefore it should remain as the national slogan -- a symbol of national spirit and patriotism," he said in the petition.

Bashir represented himself at the hearing on December 4 this year.

## Bangladesh moves up a notch

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achievement in three basic dimensions of human development -- life expectancy, education and per capita income.

Norway, Switzerland, Ireland held the top three positions in that order. Germany placed fourth along with Hong Kong, and Australia was ranked fifth.

Sri Lanka (71) and China (85) are higher up the rank scale, while India (130), Bhutan (134), Myanmar (145), Nepal (147), Pakistan (152) and Afghanistan (170) were lower on the list.

As per the HDI, no other region had experienced such rapid human development progress. The report said South Asia was the fastest growing region in human development progress witnessing a 46% growth between 1990-2018, followed by East Asia and the Pacific at 43%.

Bangladesh's HDI value is 0.614 but it is below the average of 0.634 for countries in the medium human development group and below the average of 0.642 for countries in South Asia.

But when it comes to inequality, the situation is grim. As inequality in

a country increases, the loss in human development also increases.

When the value is discounted for inequality, the HDI of Bangladesh falls to 0.465, a loss of 24.3 percent due to inequality.

In the last 28 years, the average annual HDI growth rate of Bangladesh is 1.65. But the growth rate has slowed down compared to 1990-2000 when it was 1.95 to 2010-2018 when it stood at 1.40.

The Gender Development Index measures gender inequalities in the achievement of three basic dimensions of human development -- health (measured by female and male life expectancy at birth), education (measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and mean years for adults aged 25 years and older) and command over economic resources.

The GDI is calculated for 166 countries. The 2018 female HDI value for Bangladesh is 0.575 in contrast with 0.642 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.895.

When comes to the Gender Inequality Index (GII), Bangladesh's value is 0.536, ranking 129 out of 162 countries in the 2018 index.

In the GII, India is at 122, Sri Lanka at 86, Bhutan at 99 and Myanmar at 106.

In Bangladesh, 20.3 percent of the parliamentary seats are held by women, and 45.3 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 49.2 percent of their male counterparts. In comparison, Nepal and Pakistan are ranked at 115 and 136 respectively in the GII.

Former World Bank Economist Zahid Hussain said, "The improvement in the HDI ranking, even though just by a step, is good news. At the same time, the large difference between HDI and the inequality-adjusted HDI is a concern. This reflects not only income inequality but also inequality in the distribution of life expectancy and expected years of schooling."

He said the distribution of health and education indicators is expected to be more inclusive than the distribution of income. "When that is not the case, the concern is that it would lead to a perpetuation of inequality in society. The problem may be deeper when the quality dimension is taken into consideration."