

Natore MP's nephew lands in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A Natore court yesterday sent a local Swachhasebak League leader to jail in connection with a case for assaulting an executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) and obstructing government work.

Earlier on Monday night, WDB Executive Engineer Abu Raihan filed the case with Natore Police Station against Nafuil Islam Antar, general secretary of Swachhasebak League's Natore municipality unit, and nephew of Natore-2 Lawmaker Shafiqul Islam Shimul.

Meanwhile, protesting the attack, WDB officials and employees formed a human chain and organised a press conference in front of Pani Bhaban in Dhaka the same day.

The following day, police arrested Antar from his house in Bargachha area of Natore town around 5:30pm.

According to police, Antar and his father Amirul, a contractor who works for the WDB, and also the treasurer of Natore district Awami League, locked in an altercation with Engineer Raihan when he questioned the quality of a construction work.

At one stage, Antar physically assaulted the engineer.

Later, WDB officials and workers rescued him and took him to Natore Sadar Hospital for treatment.

Low yield frustrates Nazirpur litchi growers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Litchi growers in Nazirpur upazila of Pirojpur are not happy due to low yield of the succulent fruit.

Farmers said that this year they have got hardly any litchi from their orchards. Even, there are orchards where not a single litchi has grown.

"There are around 400 litchi trees in my orchard. But I have got litchi from only a few trees," said Hangsopoti Mistry of Tarabuniya village under Sakharikathi union in the upazila.

He is the pioneer of litchi cultivation in the upazila.

"Last year, we got a good yield but the fruits were damaged due to bad weather," he also said.

"But this year we are very disappointed with the lowest yield," he said.

Manmatho Edbor, another litchi grower of the village, said that though he has over 100 litchi trees in his orchard, he has not been able to sell any litchi from there.

"Only three trees in my orchard have

borne fruits," he said. Litchi growers said that they have cultivated litchi commercially at the village and as it is a good source of income for them and more farmers are being interested to cultivate the fruit.

"However, we could not think that we won't get any fruit from the trees this year," said Sawbari Boral, a female farmer of the village.

Because of excessive heat the trees did not flower this year, they said.

"Though some of the trees flowered, most of them dropped due to drought," said farmer Sujan Sikder.

Digbijoy Hazra, Nazirpur upazila agriculture officer, said that of the seven upazilas in the district, litchi grows well at Nazirpur.

There are litchi orchards on 25 acres of land and over 150 farmers are directly involved with litchi cultivation, he also said.

"But this year, the farmers have got the lowest yield due to unfavourable weather," he added.



A litchi orchard in Pirojpur's Nazirpur upazila.

PHOTO: STAR



An abandoned cinema hall in Tangail's Delduar upazila.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

Curtains down: 46 cinema halls in Tangail shut down in 15yrs

MIRZA SHAKIL

There were 51 cinema halls in Tangail in the 1990s. But only five have managed to survive while 46 had to yield their place to newer forms of entertainment, revolution of mobile phone technology and lack of audience.

The owners still think it is possible to keep the business alive if movies with engaging stories and good production value are made and digitized cinema halls can be built with government assistance.

The cinema hall business in Tangail started with Raushan Talkies built at a secluded corner of the then small municipal town in 1950 by Lebu Chowdhury.

Following his footsteps, other movie halls opened in 12 upazilas. The number stood at 51 in the 1990s.

But within just 10 to 15 years, 46 cinema halls closed down due to various problems such as lack of audience, movies with poor production value, and losses.

Despite these crises, the owners of the five cinema halls -- one in Tangail town, two in Nagarpur Sadar upazila, one in Madhupur Sadar upazila and one at Balla in Kalihati upazila -- have kept the dwindling business alive in the district. But they do not know how long they can continue.

Inspired by Lebu Chowdhury, Montu Miah of the town's Dighulia area established the most attractive cinema hall of the town on Main Road in 1964. He named the hall Rupobani, the second theatre in the district.

In 1973, Lebu Chowdhury,

lifetime president of the hall owners' platform in the district, built his second cinema hall (third in the district) named Ruposhi on his own land at Battala in Tangail town. Later, he built three more cinema halls in Delduar, Mirzapur and Dhanbari upazilas.

In 1975, Chhana Miah of Adalatpara built the fourth cinema hall Malancha in the middle of Adalatpara and Thanapara while Afzal Chowdhury of the same area constructed a hall named Keya the next year.

Later, 46 more cinema halls were established at different places one by one till 1990s.

The business was profitable till 2000. The halls used to screen five shows daily from 10:00am to 1:00am.

There were five sitting arrangements inside the halls -- Front Stall, Stall, Real Stall, DC and Box. Moreover, a separate sitting arrangement was there for female audience. Following the booming business, cinema hall workers' union was formed in the district.

Currently, Malancha holds four shows -- at 10:00am, 1:30pm, 4:30pm and 7:30pm -- with almost zero audience.

There are three separate arrangements for the audience -- Real Stall, DC and Box -- and the prices of the tickets are Tk 50, Tk 60 and Tk 70 respectively.

During a recent visit to Malancha Cinema Hall, this correspondent found that the hall was showing the movie 'Rangbar Badsha', featuring two actors from Tangail district -- Manna and Amit Hasan. The film

has been rented at Tk 6,000 for seven days.

Some former cinema hall workers said 46 cinema halls in the district were closed from 2001 to 2015.

Jahangir Hossain, a tea stall owner in the town, said he used to watch movies every week. "The stories of the movies and the actors, actresses at that time were good. I also used to some movies more than once."

"But as the quality of movies started dropping, I stopped going to the movie halls," he said.

"But, in future, if movies with quality stories and good artistes come, I'll go back to the cinema hall and watch the movie," he added.

Jahid Hasan of Sabalia area in the town said he stopped going to halls after the death of his favourite actor Manna and the demolition of cinema halls.

Ganesh Chandra Sarkar, then director of Keya Cinema Hall and general secretary of the district cinema hall workers' union, said audiences are not going to the halls as they can watch any movie on mobile phones now.

Dulal Chowdhury, son of late Lebu Chowdhury and the then owner of Raushan Talkies and Ruposhi cinema halls, said, "After the death of my father in 2002, we had to shut the business due to huge losses."

Raushan Talkies had to be closed in 2006 due to cancellation of land leased from Coronation Dramatic Club at Nirala intersection in the town. Ruposhi Cinema Hall was shut down in 2011 due to loss, Dulal added.

Where bridge has no road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A bridge built without any connecting road in Ajmeriganj upazila of Habiganj is yet another example of fleeing public of their money.

In fiscal year 2015-16, around Tk 28 lakh was spent to construct the bridge over a canal to connect remote village of Uttarhati with Satgaon Public High

School on the other side of the canal. But, in reality, an existing road nearby has been serving the purpose very well for the villagers.

Villager Sajjad Mia said they would not mind using the bridge as an alternative way to the school, but they never had the chance to use the bridge for all these years, as connecting roads were never made for it.

In reality, an existing road nearby has been serving the purpose very well for the villagers.

Even seventh grader Joy Nath Das, a student at Satgaon Public High School, knows it was a waste of money. He said when there is already a good road to go to the school, spending money on building the bridge for a second route to the school was absolutely unnecessary.

Other than some children jumping off it into the canal for fun in the rain, the bridge now serves no purpose, said Jashim Uddin, from the same village.

As an added headache, boat accidents often take place when those collide with the bridge due to strong current in the canal during the monsoon, he added.

Farmer Mahfuz Mia said the bridge could be put to good use if only several lakh taka were spent to build roads for it.

Contacted, Mohammad Ali, project implementation officer in the upazila, said there was a road on one side of the bridge, but it was washed away by floods.

Efforts are underway to repair the damaged road, he added.



The Tk 28-lakh bridge lying useless without any road for over five years, near Uttarhati village in Ajmeriganj upazila of Habiganj.

PHOTO: STAR

Advertisement for Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) featuring the logo, name, address, and contact information. It includes a notice about the e-GP system and a tender notice for field equipment.

A large advertisement for the Public Procurement Act-2006 & The Public Procurement Regulation-2008/2010. It lists various procurement items, their estimated values, and provides a detailed table of goods and their prices.