



In the government's effort to curb the spread of Delta variant of Covid-19, law enforcers have been enforcing a "strict lockdown" across the country since July 1. They have been checking vehicles and pedestrians, magistrates have been slapping fines on many for violating the restrictions and health safety rules. The law enforcers also gave away face masks to those who did not have any. The photos were taken between yesterday and Saturday from different locations in Khulna, Barishal and Faridpur.

PHOTO: STAR



A section of the rundown road between Manikjhuri to Kachupatra Bridge in Barguna's Amtali upazila. Without some exposed brick chips and gravel in the muddy and treacherous eight-kilometre stretch of the road, it would be difficult for any traveller to imagine if it ever was a road at all. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Locals now call it a canal

8 km road in Barguna's Amtali-Taltali road is full of potholes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

About 50 thousand people from Amtali and Taltali upazilas use the 35-kilometre-long regional highway, between the upazila towns, to reach district headquarters in Barguna town or divisional headquarters in Barisal town every day.

But the commuters have been facing immense sufferings as a stretch of about eight kilometres of the road, between Manikjhuri to Kachupatra Bridge, has been in disrepair for a long time.

The dilapidated road, dotted with potholes and craters of all sizes, is a nightmare for commuters and vehicle drivers alike.

The road becomes even riskier during monsoon season when the countless potholes and craters, developed all over the road over the years, turn into huge ditches following light showers.

Locals said a two-kilometre section of the road -- from Arpangashia Bazar to Tarikata -- was repaired by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in 2018.

But due to the use of substandard material by the development contractor involved and negligence of the then LGED engineer in Amtali upazila Nazrul Islam, the road got severely damaged within such a short time, they also alleged.

During a recent visit to the road, this correspondent found numerous large potholes, about the width of the entire road, which has turned into ditches after rain. Some of the ditches were as long as 30 yards. A few vehicles that dared to travel on the road were moving at a snail's pace.

Without some exposed brick chips and gravel in the muddy and treacherous eight-kilometre stretch of the road, it would be difficult for any traveller to imagine if it ever was a road at all.

Shanu Mia, a resident of Tarikata area in Amtali, said the road in the area has been in this state for about two years, but the department concerned did not take any step to repair it till date.

The sufferings of people who need to go to Amtali upazila town or Barguna district town is beyond imagination, said Nasha Hawlader from the same area.

While talking about the submerged road, Shahadat Hossain, a trader in Arpangashia Bazar, said he would rather call it a canal.

The authorities should repair the road urgently to relieve locals from years of sufferings, he also said.

Bus driver Mojibur Rahman, who drives on Barguna-Taltali route, said accidents are frequent on the hazardous road and despite the fact, he has to risk his life driving his vehicle on it every day for earning his livelihood.

Taltali Press Club President Abdul Motalib said it was difficult for him and other locals to comprehend as to why the vital road was not being repaired urgently when the LGED and other stakeholders are very much aware of people's sufferings on the dilapidated road.

Asked, Monwarul Islam, LGED engineer in Amtali upazila, said, "I've joined my post in Amtali only recently. Necessary steps will be taken to repair the road after gathering necessary information."

From Michigan to Keshabpur for love, now an organic farmer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

American national Chris Hoggie who has been living in a remote village of Bangladesh for the last 12 years after marrying a Bangladeshi woman is now venturing into organic farming.

Hoggie plans to export the chemical fertilizer free vegetables and fruits produced at Meherpur village under Keshabpur upazila of Jashore to America. The multipurpose modern agricultural farm will have a variety of fruit trees, vegetables and they will be cultivated in modern way.

He and his wife Rahima Khatun have already started cultivation of chemical free leafy vegetables on five bighas of land in the village.

Hoggie, a petroleum engineer who hails from Michigan state of the USA, married Rahima 12 years ago and has been living in the village ever since. He has adapted himself to the Bangladeshi culture. He has also converted to Islam and now known as Ayub Hossain.

Leaving his job, he is now fully engaged in organic farming. The couple can be seen cultivating

paddy themselves in their field and share all the household chores.

Many visitors from the surrounding areas crowd their house and love to take photographs with the couple.

Rahima migrated to India with her parents at an early age due to severe poverty. She was married off at 13 in West Bengal's Barasat area and has three children from the marriage. Her ex-husband deserted

ancestral village. They are building a four-storey building by the bank of Kopotakkho river and Hoggie plans to bring his mother and children to Meherpur village after the completion of the house.

Prior to settling down in Bangladesh, he worked as a petroleum engineer at Reliance Natural Resources Company owned by Anil Ambani. His hobbies include reading books and

with them. Despite having some language barrier, Hoggie has successfully adapted himself to the family and nature of rural Bangladesh. He can be seen clad in Bangladeshi clothes and wearing a welcoming smile everywhere.

Hoggie said that he has travelled many countries in the world but he wants to spend the rest of his life in Bangladesh. The green colour Bangladesh's nature attracts him much and he also loves the radiant yellow colour of mustard fields, he said.

Besides, his organic farming venture, Hoggie has fish cultivation as well. Once a petroleum engineer, is now an accomplished farmer. This American can work relentlessly in the field and has honed all the skills of a farmer. Rahima's children said they love Hoggie as their own father and his towering figure gives them a sense of security and comfort. Rahima Khatun said that she is very happy to with her marriage and says her husband is an honest and transparent man.

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her after selling all the property. Then Rahima moved to Mumbai. Chris met Rahima in Mumbai on a good evening. They fell in love almost instantly and got married after six months.

Later, they returned to Rahima's

visiting places on his motorcycle.

Currently, he is also involved in a business besides his organic farming venture. Rahima is very happy with her husband. Her sons, their wives and daughters from her previous marriage live in harmony



Hoggie and Rahima working in the field at Meherpur village of Keshabpur upazila under Jashore district.

PHOTO: COLLECTED