

KISHOREGANJ'S KULIARCHAR

# Contractor's negligence leaves roads unusable

HELEMUL ALAM

Nasirakanda's Moharram Ali has to visit the hospital at least twice every month to have his leg checked. It got damaged severely due to a road accident nine months back.

To do this, he has to pass through the road from Nalabaid to Nasirakanda -- which falls under the Kuliarchar upazila of Kishoreganj -- to get to the hospital at Bhairab Bazar. Though it might not sound like much, but the task is of herculean difficulty for Moharram, given the shambolic state of the road.

It all started three years ago, when the road was dug for development works. Today, it is in such bad condition that no vehicle can run on it, including rickshaws, which means Moharram has to travel this part of the road carried on his brother's shoulders.

Resident of the area Mazharul Hoque Mukul said after the road was dug up -- around two and a half feet deep -- to construct a brick cement road, the contractor did nothing but build some culverts on it and just left it like that.

And Nalabaid-Nasirakanda is not the only victim of this. In fact, three more roads under Kuliarchar upazila are in the same condition.

M Sazzad Hossain, upazila engineer of Kuliarchar LGED, said works for a total of seven roads were undertaken as part of the Mymensingh Region Rural Infrastructure Development project under two packages. After a tender, the task was handed over to Ms Dolly Construction.

The estimated cost of the project is Tk 7.65 crore, he said.



The Nalabaid to Nasirakanda road was dug up three years for development works. Today, it is in such bad condition that no vehicle can run on it, including rickshaws.

PHOTO: HELEMUL ALAM

Among the seven, only three have been completed. Meanwhile only 10 percent of the Nalabaid-Nasirakanda and Matikata-Khidirpur roads were finished, and five percent of the Baghpara-Trimohuni, Birkashim Nagar-Barobari, and Pakkar Matha-Birkashim Nagar roads were completed.

Sazzad said they have sent a proposal to the project director via the executive engineer of Kishoreganj in May, urging him to cancel the contract with Dolly Construction and give them a final notice in this regard.

"It will be good news for the residents if the tender is cancelled. We've understood that this contractor is not going to get the works done," he said.

Contacted, Monowar Hossain, assistant engineer of Ms Dolly Construction, said they cannot finish the works as they are yet to receive

the bill in its entirety.

He said they started in December 2018 and completed 100 percent of the works for three roads, but are yet to receive even half of the money.

"We will be able to resume the project once we get the money," he said. "We've already spent around Tk three to four crores on this. We want to finish the project but it depends on getting the money," he claimed.

However, upazila engineer Sazzad said this is not possible as they cannot provide the entire bill to Dolly Construction before the whole project is completed.

Meanwhile, when this correspondent contacted project director Md Nazrul Islam he said they have already cancelled Dolly Construction's contract around a month ago and will now go for a fresh tender after finishing a new assessment and estimation of the roads.

## PKSF, WB sign US\$ 250m deal

CITY DESK

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) and the World Bank (WB) signed an agreement of US\$ 250 million on October 27 to implement the Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE) project, to strengthen the informal sector.

Dr Nomita Haldar ndc, managing director of PKSF, and Mercy Miyang Tembon, resident representative of the WB, signed the agreement, said a press release.

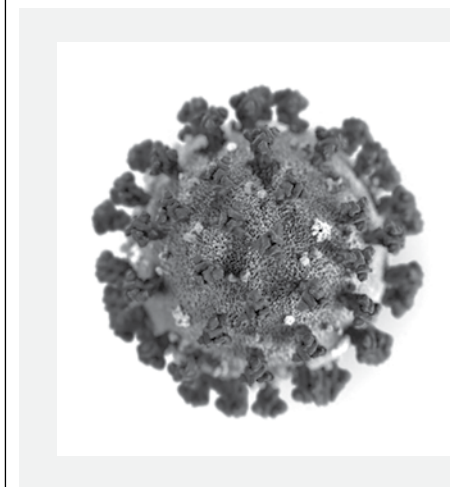
Of the US\$ 250 million, the WB will finance US\$ 150 million and PKSF will provide the remaining US\$ 100 million.

The RAISE will facilitate employability and productivity of the informal sector and extend financial assistance, through 70 PKSF partner organisations, to 1,75,000 youths having low income in urban and peri-urban areas across the country. Micro-entrepreneurs, adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, will also get financial assistance on easy terms under the project.

PKSF will arrange training on sustainable micro-enterprise management, life skills development for young entrepreneurs and foreign language training for the technically skilled youths willing to work abroad. Thirty percent of the total participants of the project will be women.

CVASU STUDY ON CORONAVIRUS IN CTG

# 50pc developed antibody naturally



ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

At least 50 percent people in Chattogram have developed antibodies naturally against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, according to a study conducted by One Health Institute of Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU).

The study also revealed that 62.33 percent of people who received a single dose and 99.13 percent of people who received both doses of vaccine developed antibodies against the virus.

The study was conducted on 746 people of different age-groups and professions, including doctors, nurses, sweepers, ready-made garment workers and so on, from March to early last month.

Of them, 292 (39.14 percent) were unvaccinated, 223 (29.89 percent) received a single dose of vaccine, while 231 (30.97 percent) received both doses.

Of the unvaccinated, it was seen that around 50 percent developed antibody naturally, said Prof Dr Gautam Buddha Das, vice chancellor of CVASU, the lead

### STUDY AT A GLANCE

Research conducted from Mar to early Sept on 746 people

62.33pc who received single vaccine dose, 99.13pc who received both doses developed antibodies

Amount of antibodies wanes significantly (25 percent) after 2nd month of receiving 1st dose

researcher.

He said the aim of the study was to find the presence of antibodies (IgG) and their amount (titre) in research subjects.

It was seen that the average amount of antibodies among unvaccinated people was 53.71 du/ml, among those who received a single dose of vaccine was 159.08 du/ml, and among those who received both doses was 255.48 du/ml.

This means people who received a single dose of vaccine developed three times more antibodies than those who did not receive any vaccine, while those who received both doses were five times more likely than non-vaccinated people, explained Prof Das.

Prof Dr Sharmin Chaudhury, principal investigator and head of CVASU One Health Institute, said a significant amount of antibodies was found among people who had received both doses of vaccine after six months of their second dose.

However, the amount of antibodies wanes significantly (25 percent) after the second month of receiving the first dose. As such, it is important to receive both doses, she concluded.

## Six cop imposters arrested for robbery: Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested six persons in Savar early yesterday on charges of robbing people posing as police officers.

Shamim Reza, Helal Uddin, Parvez, Wasim Islam, Naim Khan and Ferdous Ahmed Raju were held at Paschim Rajshahi area, said the elite force.

"The arrestees used to stop vehicles in Savar and Ashulia at night, impersonating as cops, and loot money, ornaments, cellphones and other valuables," Rab-4 Commanding Officer Mozammel Haque told a press briefing at its media centre in the capital's Karwan Bazar.

Police uniforms, a fake ID card, walkie-talkie, handcuffs, a gun, some locally-made sharp weapons, 467 yaba pills, 30 bottles of phensedyl, marijuana, heroin, 19 cellphones and Tk 44,570 were seized from their possession.

Rab claimed Shamim from Rajshahi is the gang's ringleader.

The Rab official said Shamim used to introduce himself as a sub-inspector and used the seized items to extort money from people.

The arrested six are accused in several cases filed with different police stations for snatching, and possessing arms and drugs, Rab said.



Jute mill workers brought out a red-flag procession on Khulna city's BIDC Road yesterday, demanding payment of their arrears according to the 2015 wage scale and reopening of five jute mills -- including Khalishpur and Daulatpur jute mills -- under government arrangement.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## 'Stop putting profit over human lives'

Youth in Khulna urge world leaders ahead of COP-26

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The youth of Khulna urged the world leaders to stop carbon emissions through a symbolic protest in the city yesterday, ahead of the UN Climate Conference (COP-26) scheduled to commence today in Glasgow, Scotland.

The protestors called out the world leaders for not delivering on their promises to fight climate change.

They mentioned that the coastal areas in Bangladesh are submerging due to climate change. Every year, thousands of people, particularly from Khulna and Sakhira, are being displaced by river erosion and cyclones.

The International Organization for Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that human civilisation cannot be saved by the end of the twenty-first century unless the use of fossil fuel is stopped.

And yet, companies from China, Japan and the USA are investing more in fossil fuels without considering the consequences the coastal population of Bangladesh would have to face.

"They prefer profit over human lives," said the protestors. Bangladesh Working Group on External Debt, Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) and Participatory Research Action Network (PRAN) jointly organised the protest.

"CLEAN pledges to stop investing in fossil fuels, reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2050 and ensure 100 percent renewable energy," said Hassan Mehedi, executive director of CLEAN.

## Vested quarter

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violence carried out in the district could not have been done by any individual belonging to any religion, as no religion allows communal attacks and vandalism.

The dialogue was organised following the state minister's visit to establishments of the Hindu community that came under attack during the violence, reports our Noakhali correspondent.

The state minister also visited houses of two people killed during the communal attacks and handed Tk 50,000 cheques to each of the families.

He said the attack was also carried out to derail the government's development activities and bar the ruling party from participating in the next general election.

He urged people to assist the local administration to arrest the perpetrators and ensure their punishment.

## DMCH's 'dirty' laundry

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working in such a condition. Due to the hard work, the workforce changes constantly.

Salman Molla, who claimed to be an honours student at a college in Gopalganj, said he started the job last year to support his family.

Asked about lack of cleanliness and sheets getting torn, the 21-year-old said it's due to manpower shortage as they are under huge workload.

Abul Hossain (42), who has been working there for seven years, echoed him.

"Five of us wash the linens and others help us fold and carry those... We try our best but there are not enough of us to handle the workload," said the Nimtoli resident.

### NOT PROPERLY WASHED

Meanwhile, many of the hospital staffers complained that this method of washing and cleaning is old and the linens are not being cleaned properly.

They demanded that the system be upgraded.

"At times, blood stains and other spots remain on the sheets, and we have to send those back for cleaning. They also get torn in places," said a nurse supervisor, seeking anonymity.

"Many times, attendants or patients also ask us to change the bedsheets," she added.

Another senior nurse said they mostly have to bear the brunt of the situation, as patients and attendants often blame them.

"If we had a washing plant, then this problem would not have persisted. We are upgrading and improving our service at the hospital constantly when it comes to treating patients... but what about the linens? They are also an integral part of the process," she pointed out.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hanif Mia, a patient at the neurosurgery ward, said, "I have been admitted here for last two weeks. Even

after the bedsheet gets dirty, it gets changed after two-three days. Often, they are not cleaned properly. I raised the issue but to no avail."

Some patients at the cabin block of the hospital's old building echoed him. They, however, said they do get new bedsheets regularly but often times they are not cleaned properly.

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not get in touch with the contractor who is in-charge of the manpower at the laundry.

However, this newspaper met with the contractor's representative, Mohammad Jewel, recently, who introduced himself as his assistant.

That day, workers were washing around 1,920 hospital linens.

He admitted that they have a manpower crisis. "Before we had 15 workers but some left. Eleven of us, including me, are working here. We try our best... If we see

any spot or find linens dirty we clean those right away," he added.

"We are also trying to increase manpower," he said.

### WASHING PLANT FOR CORONA WARD

It's not that DMCH does not have any modern facility for washing.

Linens from the coronavirus ward at the hospital are sent to a washing plant situated next to the old laundry place.

It's a small operation, but effective nonetheless.

They used to wash around 300 linens a day, said Chayan Das, supervisor of the (Covid-19) washing plant. "Now, we wash around 200 linens per day," he said.

Chayan said four persons -- two temporary and two hospital staffers -- work at the plant. He said they have set up the plant around two years ago.

They used to have a similar one in Tejgaon, he added.

### WHAT OFFICIALS SAY

Regarding health risks of workers and those who are using the linens, Prof Dr Sultana Shahana Banu, head of the virology department at Dhaka Medical College, said the workers must follow health guidelines while collecting, washing and distributing the linens.

"If they do not follow the procedures, there are of course health risks involved here," she added.

Contacted, DMCH Director Brig Gen Nazmul Haque said they have outsourced the washing process and are not directly involved with it. He, however, said he did not hear any major complaints in this regard.

"We are trying to improve the service. For example, we do not wash linens from corona ward this way. We use separate washing machines for those," he said.

"We are planning to upgrade the overall system soon," he added.

## 1st Death Anniversary



Today (October 30, 2021) is the first death anniversary of late Fazilatunnesa (Mini), wife of M. Azizullah of Uttara, Dhaka. Relatives & well-wishers are kindly requested to pray for the eternal salvation of the departed soul.

- Family members

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## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. RFP/BAN/2021/014: Provision of Media Monitoring Service related to Health Topics/Issues for WHO Bangladesh under Long Term Agreement.

Deadline for the submission of RFP: 14:00 hrs, 14 November 2021.

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from:

<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice>.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in separate sealed envelopes in the Tender Box kept in the reception of WHO Bangladesh office.

## 130 more hospitalised

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Eighty-nine people have died of dengue in the country this year, all who died in July, August, September and October.

Twelve people died in July while 34 have died in August, 23 in September and 20 in October so far.

Among the deaths, 82 have died in Dhaka division and five each in Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Barishal. Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 823 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 154 outside the capital, the DCHS data shows.

## Bangladesh can tackle

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The implementation of the plans is going on, he added.

He said Bangladeshi scientists and officials have been prioritising invention and expansion of salinity, drought and submergence tolerant rice.

"We've seen many successes in these areas," he added.

Razzaque said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will highlight damages due to climate change and Bangladesh's expectations at the World Climate Summit 2021.

Professor Dr ASM Maksud Kamal, pro-vice-chancellor of Dhaka University; Professor Khandker Bazlul Haque, chairman of Awami League Sub-Committee on Forest and Environment and Professor Dr Sadaka Halim, dean of Social Science Faculty, Dhaka University, spoke at the event, among others.

Dr Delwar Hossain, professor of International Relations, Dhaka University, presented the keynote speech.