



An area near the Kuakata sea beach in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila. Concrete blocks have been laid along the shoreline as part of a Tk 1,089.95-crore project to strengthen 208 kilometres of existing embankments in three districts on the southern seaboard of the country.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Southern levee improvement project nears completion

62 percent of the Tk 1,090-crore project completed till October this year

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The reinforcing and heightening work of old coastal embankments in Pirojpur, Barguna and Patuakhali is going on in full swing, with the completion deadline of June 2022.

The work started on July 19, 2017 and 62 percent of it has been completed till this October, said AKM Mujibur Rahman, the supervising engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

Chinese contractor firm Chongqing International Construction Corporation is carrying out the BWDB project, titled 'Coastal Embankment Improvement Project (CEIP)'.
As part of the project, the BWDB is spending Tk 1,089.95 crore to raise the height of a 208-kilometre stretch of existing earthen embankments -- built in the 60s along the coastlines of the three districts -- from 6 metres to 7.5 metres, said Mujibur, the BWDB engineer.

Beginning at Bhandaria of Pirojpur and ending at Galachipa of Patuakhali, the embankments run along the shorelines of Patharghata in Barguna and Kalapara in Patuakhali, to create a semi-circular shield of protection from tidal surges or rise in sea level.

In addition, concrete blocks are being used along the shores to reinforce the levees where six sluice gates and three inlets are being built.

In Patuakhali, 38 kilometres of levees -- along the shores of Kalapara and Galachipa upazilas -- are being reinforced and heightened at a cost of Tk 136.78 crore.

Once completed, the improved embankments will help protect a significant number of installations on the country's southern seaboard, including tourist hotspots like Kuakata, from rising sea level due to the effects of climate change, Mujibur added.

During a recent visit, a large

area on the beach of Kuakata -- in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila -- was seen covered in neatly arranged concrete blocks.

Shahjahan Akon, a local, said he hoped that the improved levee will save croplands and houses in the area from recurring destruction.

Aside from protecting the popular beach, the embankment will be an added attraction to tourists, said Khan Intiaz Hossain, who was visiting the area from Barisal.

Now that the improved embankment is taking shape, there is a ray of hope for local tourism industry, which has been under threat due to continued erosion of the beach, said Motaleb Sharif, general secretary of 'Kuakata Hotel Motel Owners' Association'.

Anwar Hossain Hawladar, mayor of Kuakata municipality, hoped that the levee will bring respite to townspeople from flooding and tidal surges.

20-metre of embankment collapses in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A portion of an embankment has gone into the Bangshi due to untimely erosion by the river in Fatepur union of Mirzapur upazila, threatening schools, market and other establishments.

As a result, local people are now passing each day in fear as the whole embankment may go into the river anytime.

Haat Fatepur High School, Haat Fatepur Bazar and other establishments including Fatepur union parishad, union land office, a sub health centre, a madrasa and Fatepur-Mohera-Mirzapur road lie beside the river.

If emergency protective measures are not taken by the authorities immediately, the river may devour those establishments anytime, said villagers.

In the 2013-2014 fiscal year, Water Development Board (WDB) constructed a 165-metre guide embankment at a cost of Tk 2 crore to protect the area from the river erosion.

Yasin Ali, night guard of Haat Fatepur High School, said 20-metre stretch of the embankment collapsed near the school on Sunday night.

Farid Hossain, headmaster of the school, said he informed the executive engineer of the Tangail WDB the following day about the matter and requested him

to take necessary measures to protect the institution from the erosion.

"We have also informed the matter to the upazila administration and urged them to take immediate measures to protect the school, market and other establishments in the area from the untimely erosion," said Abdul Gafur Shikder, president of the managing committee of Haat Fatepur High School.

In 2013-2014 fiscal year, WDB constructed a 165-metre guide embankment at a cost of Tk 2 crore to protect the area from erosion.

Mirzapur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Hafizur Rahman said necessary protective measures will be taken as early as possible following discussion with the WDB and higher authorities.

Mohammad Sirajul Islam, executive engineer of WDB in Tangail, said an assistant engineer has already visited the spot. Emergency protective measures will be taken immediately.



With erosion by the Bangshi river, part of an embankment has collapsed near Haat Fatepur High School in Fatepur union of Tangail's Mirzapur upazila, creating panic among locals.

PHOTO: STAR

Cop held with heroin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Dinajpur court yesterday sent a policeman to jail in connection with a case for posing heroin.

Earlier, the law enforcers detained Aminul Islam, 35 a constable at Madhyapara Police Investigation Centre in Dinajpur's Parbatipur upazila, along with 40kg heroin on Monday.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Hakimpur Police Station Khairul Bashar Shamim said, acting on a tip-off, the raided Aminul's rented house at Chandipur village in Hakimpur upazila around 4:30pm and seized 40g of heroin from his possession.

Aminul, son of Abu Hanif of Khatramari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, has been recently transferred to Madhyapara IC from Hamimpur Police Station, the OC added.

73 sacks of govt rice seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-12) seized 73 sacks of rice, meant for the government's food friendly programme, from Delduar upazila yesterday.

The law enforcers also detained two people for hoarding the rice illegally and selling those in the black market. Lt Commander Abdullah Al Mamun, commander of Crime Prevention Company-3 of Rab-12, said, acting on a tip-off, they raided a jute warehouse at Silimpur Bazar and seized 73 sacks (each sack containing 30kg) rice meant for the poor from there.

They also arrested Abdul Aziz, 60, of Belta village, and Mohammad Sohel, 28, of Charpara village of Tangail Sadar upazila, from the spot.

3 held over gang rape in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Police have arrested three men for their alleged involvement in the gang-rape of a minor girl in Faridpur Sadar upazila.

In a press conference at Faridpur Kotwali Police Station, Jamal Pasha, additional superintendent of police in Faridpur, confirmed yesterday.

The arrestees are Akash Sheikh, 18, and Roni Sheikh, 18, of Aijuddin Matubbar Dangi village and Shipon Sheikh, 19, of Purbadangi village in the upazila, said police.

According to police, Akash Sheikh picked up the victim in a battery-run three-wheeler around 10:00pm on

Sunday. Three others helped him.

They then took the girl to a garlic field in a nearby village and raped her. Later, they left the girl there.

The victim returned home and shared her experience with her mother. She was then sent to Faridpur Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital on early Monday.

The victim's father filed a case with Kotwali Police Station against Sheikh and other unidentified four men under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act on early Tuesday.

Later, police arrested Akash from Tapakhola area on the same day and later arrested Roni and Shipon.

Eng v NZ promises another epic

FROM PAGE 12

on the back of Kane Williamson's mind.

The Kiwis went on to lose the final after the regulation 50 overs and the super over produced ties, with the result being decided in favour of England due to them having scored more boundaries during the 50 overs.

Williamson, however, had mentioned after the final that they didn't lose the game, and probably when the two sides meet again today, the fans won't rule out the possibility of another nail-biting finish.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has since changed the rule, with the game now to be decided only by the super over and not by the percentage of boundaries scored by teams if a match eventually ends in a tie.

New Zealand head coach Gary Stead informed that the ghosts of the 2019 won't haunt them in their semifinal clash

against England.

From being knocked out by Bangladesh in the group stage of the 2015 World Cup to becoming the World Champions in the 2019 World Cup and becoming the number one T20I side -- the rise of England, especially in the white ball format, clearly reflects the result of long-term planning.

Eoin Morgan and Co have adopted a fearless brand of cricket where the attacking mindset from each individual sets them apart from the others in world cricket.

It is going to be an interesting battle between the Kiwi swing bowlers in the powerplay with Trent Boult, Tim Southee and Adam Milne against a high-flying England top-order, which has the scoring rate of 8.33 in the power play -- the best in the tournament so far.

Jos Buttler, who scored the only century of the ongoing World Cup and is

also the second-highest run-getter of the tournament, will surely have a big role to play in absence of Jason Roy, who was ruled out due to a calf injury.

England will also miss injured Tymal Mills -- their main weapon in the death overs -- while New Zealand skipper Williamson has also remained cautious due to his complex elbow injury for quite some time.

The battle between the spinners of the two sides is also going to be a sight to behold, with leg-spinners Ish Sodhi and Adil Rashid set to play crucial roles for New Zealand and England respectively.

Both New Zealand and England had managed to overcome the hurdles of tough UAE conditions where hot and humid weather didn't hold them back from playing their own game and fans can definitely expect fireworks in the night game starting at 8pm tonight.

UN Mission may withdraw

FROM PAGE 12

steadily escalating level of fighting there threatened to make the mission's job impossible, reported the Baltimore Sun.

Baltimore Sun correspondent, John Woodruff, reporting from Dhaka said Paul-Marc Henry, the UN Assistant Secretary-General who headed the mission in Bangladesh, was having trouble in reaching liberated areas without new arrangements involving permission from the Bangladesh Government. Many foreign correspondents also reported that at least a quarter of the total land of Bangladesh was now under control of the Government of Bangladesh.

Woodruff also pointed out that the West Pakistani Generals in Bangladesh not yet agreed to let the UN mission distribute food directly to the people.

14-YEAR JAIL

Jail terms of 14 years' rigorous imprisonment was handed down to each of 55 civil servants who had fled Pakistan following the March crackdown, a military source

announced. All the accused were tried in absentia by a military court in East Pakistan. Four senior professors of Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities were among those convicted.

ON THE WAR FRONT

In the Khulna-Jashore-Kushtia sector, Mukti Bahini made surprise raids today on para-military camps of the enemy at Shakura and Mohanpur. Several enemy irregulars were killed in the action. Mukti Bahini captured 57 rifles and guns from these camps.

Mukti Bahini blew up train carrying occupation troops by explosion of mines near Kurigram today. In that action 8 Pakistani soldiers including one officer were killed and eight bogies of the train were damaged. On the same day another vehicle carrying Pakistani troops from Kurigram to Chilmari was ambushed by the freedom fighters. In that action two Pakistani soldiers, 3 Razakars and the driver of the vehicle were killed.

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Banned on nat'l, regional highways

FROM PAGE 12

ministries, we will hold an inter-ministerial meeting before finalising the draft," Yousub Ali Mollah, additional secretary (estate wing) of RTHD, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Necessary procedures would be followed before making the guideline functional, he added.

WHY THE GUIDELINE?

Total 48.69 lakh vehicles got registered with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) until September this year, of them 3.19 vehicles are three-wheelers.

But a good number of unregistered three-wheelers like easy-bike, Nasimon and Karimon are being operated on roads, and the number of the vehicles are increasing day by day.

"But such small, unregistered and unapproved vehicles are not technically safe for operation. Safety units of the vehicles, including brake, steering, and suspension, are not standard," reads the draft guideline.

Besides, operations of such slow-moving vehicles alongside speedy vehicles on highways often cause accidents and as per different reports, most victims of road

accidents were passengers of such vehicles, it added.

A total of 3,095 people were killed in 3,259 road crashes in the first seven months of this year -- over 40 percent higher than that of the same period last year, according to a police report.

The country saw the sharp rise in road crashes even though operations of bus and minibuses remained suspended for long this year due to Covid-19 shutdown.

Experts blamed plying of a huge number of small vehicles on highways for the sharp rise in casualties.

"In this situation, operations of such small vehicles should be controlled.

However, the vehicles are being used by a large number of people as cost-effective vehicles," reads the draft.

In June 2019, RTHD formed a 12-member committee to make recommendations how to control these vehicles. Besides, they were asked to give opinions how the vehicles can be kept in operation in particular areas by improving their technical standard.

The committee submitted its report in January this year and another committee led by BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad

Mazumder prepared the draft guideline.

WHAT THE GUIDELINE FURTHER SAYS? As per the draft, upon receiving the route permit, "auto-rickshaw and auto-tempo" would be operated in a particular area except the national and regional highways.

A government committee would set the number of the vehicles for a particular area and the fare.

Battery-run easy-bike can run on upazila and union level routes after taking route permit.

The easy-bike can be allowed on the alleys in city corporation areas and district towns for just two years after the guideline comes into effect. These would not be permitted there after that.

Locally-made three-wheelers like Nasimon and Karimon can also ply upazila and union level routes.

All such three-wheelers must have registration, route permit, fitness clearance and tax token from the competent authorities. Prior permission from the concerned authorities would be required to sell the vehicles.

Drivers would wear particular uniforms and must have licences, the draft mentions.

Pay up

FROM PAGE 12

said he believed the question was premature.

"I don't think the discussion is at that stage yet," he told reporters at the Glasgow summit. "We do not know yet what loss and damage actually is, how it is different from adaptation. We are poking in the dark here."

EU climate policy chief Frans Timmermans told reporters the bloc supported efforts to "get money where it needs to be as quickly as possible" but that work still needed to be done to get the details right.

A representative of the US

delegation at the conference did not respond to a request for comment.

Meanwhile, an updated UN assessment said yesterday that new national emissions-cutting pledges -- including a vow last week by India to be carbon neutral by 2070 -- are likely to have a minimal effect on temperature rises this century.

In its annual Emissions Gap report last month, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) had said current decarbonisation plans -- known as nationally determined contributions, or NDCs -- put the world on track to warm 2.7C this century.

PM in Paris

FROM PAGE 12

Upon her arrival at the Matignon, French Prime Minister Jean Castex will receive her with a bouquet of flowers.

Sheikh Hasina arrived here in the morning from London to attend the 75th Anniversary of UNESCO and distribute the first-ever UNESCO-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman International Prize for Creative Economy.

During the Paris tour, Hasina will also have meetings with French President Emmanuel Macron and French Prime Minister Jean Castex.

Today, Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury

and Dassault Aviation president Eric Trappier, Thales president Patrice Caine will call on her at her place of residence.

She will have a meeting with a high-profile delegate of French business organisation MEDEF's.

French Minister Florence Parly will also meet her.

Later in the day, she will visit the French Senate where she will receive an official reception during the ongoing Senate Session.

On November 11, Hasina will attend the Paris Peace Forum.

Later, she will go to attend the Unesco-

Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman International Prize for the Creative Economy at Unesco Headquarters. From there she will go to Elysée Palace to attend the dinner to be hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron in honour of her.

On November 12, Hasina will go to the Paris Peace Forum and attend a high-level panel discussion on South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

She will also go to the Unesco Headquarters to attend the inaugural session of the 75th Founding anniversary of Unesco and deliver her speech there.

She collects about 100 kg (220 lbs) of waste each week, which is then sorted out by her colleagues and sent for recycling or sold. She has a stock of 6,000 books to lend and wants to take the mobile service to neighbouring areas as well.

Kevin Alamsyah, an avid 11-year-old reader, scours for waste lying in the village.

"When there is too much trash, our environment will become dirty and it's not healthy. That's why I look for trash to borrow a book," he says.