



A view of an emaciated cluster of houses in Barguna's Amtali upazila. Lack of renovation has made the houses unfit to live in.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

BARGUNA ASHRAYAN PROJECTS

Lack of renovation makes 550 houses uninhabitable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A total of 550 houses under 55 barracks constructed for the shelterless people in Barguna's Amtali upazila have become unlivable due to lack of renovation and most of the houses are lying empty as the occupants have moved elsewhere.

Due to lack of supervision, miscreants are stealing the CI (corrugated iron) sheets, iron bars and other valuables of the houses at night. Locals said that there is no initiative of the government to renovate the houses built for the marginal people.

It could be learnt that the construction of the houses of the Ashrayan project started in 1991 with the funding of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and it

was supervised by the Bangladesh Navy to house the homeless and extremely poor families displaced by erosion. Another project named barrack house was built with the help of the government of Japan government after Cyclone Sidr had hit the country in 2007.

According to Amtali upazila Project Implementation Office (PIO), there are 550 houses in eight shelter projects under Amtali upazila. The houses have not been renovated for a long time and now they have become uninhabitable. Most of the families no longer live there leaving the barracks empty. The miscreants have taken away all the CI (corrugated iron) sheets fencing the shelters in Kalibari area.

The situation is similar in 10 houses adjacent to the sluice gate of Golbunia village in Amtali

union. Only a family lives there in the cluster of 10 houses. The door, window and the CI sheets have already been stolen.

A similar situation was seen at the housing projects in Arpangasia, Charghat in Amtali union, Kalagachhia in Gulishakhali union and South Taktabunia, Kalibari in Haldia union and Golbunia in South West Amtali. Only the skeletal remains of the houses prevail.

Jamuna Begum, a resident of South Taktabunia Ashrayan said, "The roof is perforated. A little rain floods the house. It is hard to stay here."

Another resident, Razia Begum, said, "The condition of the house is so bad that nobody can live here." She also complained of the perforated roof.

The president of the Ashrayan,

Sultan Mridha, said, "The shelter house is now lying in an abandoned state. The residents have moved elsewhere as the houses have become uninhabitable."

Motahar Uddin Mridha, chairman of Amtali Union Parishad, said, "The houses have not been renovated after construction. As a result, they have become uninhabitable. The houses need to be renovated immediately."

Amtali Upazila Project Implementation Officer Mofizur Rahman said, "Currently, we have no fund allocation for the renovation of the houses of the Asrayan projects. Once the allocation is received, reform initiatives will be taken."

Amtali Upazila Nirbahi Officer (acting) Kawsar Hossain said necessary steps will be taken in consultation with the higher authorities.

Bridge turns death trap

The 30-year-old bailey bridge got damaged several times in last 2 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The iron-structured bridge on the Fanaí river in Kulaura upazila has remained severely dilapidated for long, causing suffering to thousands of locals and hampering movement of traffic.

Locals alleged that the 30-year-old bailey bridge in Rautgaon union has been partially repaired at least eight to ten times in the last two years.

Although authorities concerned put a signboard, prohibiting movement of heavy vehicles, in front of the dilapidated bridge on Kulaura-Rabirbazar road, thousands of commuters cross it to go to their destinations taking risk of fatal accidents.

More than one and a half lakh inhabitants of different villages under Prithimpasha, Karmadha, Tilagaon, Hajipur and Sharifpur unions in the upazila have to cross the bridge to go to the upazila headquarters.

Vehicular movement on on Kulaura-Rabirbazar route was closed for a day after a portion of the still structure broke down on March 16 and July 2 this year.

While visiting the spot recently this correspondent saw three steel plates of the bridge were totally displaced, posing risk of accidents.

Although, Roads and Highways Department (RHD) repaired the displaced

plates, two steel plates again got displaced within few hours of renovation.

Locals said despite the warning sign most of the drivers ignore it and continue cross the bridge with heavy vehicles.

They said alongside several hundred CNG-run auto-rickshaws a good number of passenger buses and goods-laden trucks from adjacent areas use the bridge every day.

The bridge turned more risky due to frequent movement of heavy vehicles and lack of monitoring, locals alleged.

Local resident Anisur Rahman said they urged the authorities concerned to repair the worn out bridge on several occasion, but to no avail.

"Now we want a permanent bridge in place of the older one and widening of the road as soon as possible," he added.

Gayatri Chakraborty, a lecturer at Langla Modern Degree College, said although the Kulaura-Rabirbazar-Tilagaon road has recently been renovated, the Fanaí Bridge remain in the same condition for long.

Prithimpasha UP Chairman Nawab Ali Bakar Khan said movement of heavy vehicles will gradually increase on the route soon after opening of the Rajapur Bridge.

Moulvibazar RHD Executive Engineer Zia Uddin said I have sent proposals to rebuild the bridge, but it was not approved.



A still plate of the iron-structured bailey bridge on the Fanaí river in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila is seen displaced, hampering vehicular movement.

PHOTO: STAR

Khaleda

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So far, her bail term has been extended four times.

Earlier, Khaleda's family appealed to the government seeking permission to take her abroad for treatment but the government never responded.

Man killed

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gunfight around 3:00am, he added.

After the gunfight, officers found the man with bullet wounds and sent him to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex where doctors pronounced him dead, the BGB official said.

The body will be sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for an autopsy, said Mohammad Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station.

President

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of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Bangladesh and India are jointly organising a "Logo and Backdrop" designing competition, marking the Maitri Diwas.

12,000

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The 12-minute piece was observed by around 260 auditors from KPMG, charged with ensuring each musician complied with the rules to set a new record, which include not sharing instruments and playing for at least five minutes during the score.

Guinness will announce in the next 10 days whether Venezuela has outflanked a 2019 Russian orchestra of 8,097 musicians as the world's largest.

The performers were brought together by Venezuela's publicly funded 'El Sistema' program, which was founded in 1975 and has since provided classical music training to thousands of working-class children.

Gustavo Dudamel, the music director of the Paris Opera and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, is one of its most notable alumni.

PK Halder helped loan forgery

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a top official of the ACC on condition of anonymity.

So far, ACC's Deputy Director Gulshan Anwar Prodhan and deputy assistant directors Afnan Jannat Keya and Ferdous Rahman yesterday filed five cases against G&G Enterprize, Tamim and Talha Brothers, Greenline Development, MTB Marine and P&L International; ILFSL's former directors and officials for misappropriating about Tk 230 crore of ILFSL.

The investigators found G&G Enterprize, owned by Gopal Chandra Ganguly, applied for a term loan of Tk 30 crore on June 18, 2015 to ILFSL's managing director.

Without any scrutiny, a loan proposal was prepared three days later, which was signed off by Haque and presented before the executive committee chaired by ILFSL's director Nasim Anwar.

The loan was approved on June 28 at the 228th board meeting, which was attended by Hashem, Nowsherul Islam, Basudev Banerjee and Mizanur Rahman.

On the same day, the loan agreement was signed. The money was transferred to Reliance Finance, now rechristened Aviva Finance.

Pakistani foreign secy calls

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7-PARTY ALLIANCE FORMED

Seven right-wing political parties today agreed to forge parliamentary alliance, apparently in a bid for power when the government in Pakistan would be transferred to civilians in December. The United Coalition Party, as the alliance would be known, chose as its leader Nurul Amin, President of Pakistan Democratic Party.

SOVIET BIDS PAKISTAN REVIVE INDIA TIES

The Soviet Union today backed up reported shipments of arms to India with an appeal to Pakistan to seek the restoration of good-neighbourly relations with India "in the interest of international security."

An article in the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia charged that an anti-Indian campaign was being fanned in Pakistan just when a favorable political atmosphere was needed to achieve a peaceful solution of the East Pakistani

"From there, the money was transferred to different persons and organisations," reads the first information report.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the FIR.

In their confessional statements given under section 164, Haque, ILFSL's acting MD Abid Hasan and senior manager Rafsan Riad Chowdhury said Halder used to be present in the board meetings and was instrumental in the sanctioning of the loans.

"Most of the time, the money was transferred to the fictitious organisations of PK Halder," the FIR said.

The ACC made Halder, Ganguly, Anwar, Banerjee, Hashem, Islam, Haque, Chowdhury and ILFSL Vice-Chairman Nahida Runai accused in the loan forgery.

Last week, the ACC gave a charge sheet in a case filed against Halder for amassing wealth illegally. Halder, who came to the spotlight after the drive against illegal casinos in 2019, had accumulated about Tk 426 crore beyond his known sources of income, the ACC found.

Earlier this year, the ACC filed 15 cases against 37 for embezzling about Tk 1,150 crore from ILFSL.

refugee problem.

ON THE WAR FRONT

Mukti Bahini ambushed Pakistani troops today at South Khetkibari, Rangpur killing three enemy soldiers and injuring one.

Mukti Bahini fired on Pakistani position at Chhagalnaiya in Noakhali district today. Five Pakistani soldiers were killed in the action.

Mukti Bahini in an encounter with the enemy killed seven irregulars and captured six Razakars from Kaliakoir, Dhaka.

Mukti Bahini fired with mortars on Pakistani troops position in Araipara area of Madaripur. In this action, three enemy soldiers were killed and three were wounded.

Another group of Mukti Bahini ambushed occupation troops moving in Jainagar area killing two and injuring three enemy soldiers.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

Clash of gangs kills 68

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Other groups, sensing weakness in the Tiguerones with that man gone, went on the attack to try to crush the gang, Arosemena said.

He said their goal was "to go in and carry out a total massacre."

'HELP THEM'

Earlier Saturday, police officers in riot gear were seen climbing up the blood-stained prison walls, while the body of an inmate in an orange prison jumpsuit lay on the roof of the jail encircled by barbed wire.

Images posted on social networks, whose authenticity has not been confirmed

by the authorities, showed a pile of bodies in a night-time prison courtyard being consumed by flames while inmates standing nearby beat the bodies with sticks.

In another video, a prisoner from the block that was being attacked says, "We are locked in our pavilion. They want to kill us all."

"Please share this video. Please help us!" the inmate implores, as repeated bangs are heard in the background.

Dozens of people gathered outside the prison gates Saturday morning, fainting or weeping as they tried to learn the fate of their loved ones inside.

Truckers

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Aladipur area, around 13km away from the Daulatdia ferry terminal. Traffic police kept the trucks waiting there so that a large number of trucks could not throng the terminal at one time.

"I have come here around six hours ago. I don't know when my bus will be able to cross the river," said Suján Sheikh, of Miapur village in Barishal's Nazirpur upazila, who was going to the capital with his wife and children.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), a government body under the Ministry of Shipping, operates the ferry service.

Normally, 22 ferries ply the Paturia-Daulatdia ferry route. But now 17 ferries are in operation. Of the rest, four have been sent to dockyard for overhauling. Another ferry -- Shah Amanat -- tipped over at the terminal on October 27, said Zillur Rahman, deputy general manager (commerce) of BIWTC's Aricha regional office in Manikganj.

Most of the ferries are two to four decades old, said sources at the terminal.

"If all the 22 ferries can be kept operational, we can carry around 8,000 vehicles daily. But now, we can carry 6,000. Furthermore, traffic pressure has recently been intensified, deepening the crisis," said Zillur.

"We are allowing passenger vehicles and perishable-goods carrying vehicles to board ferries on a priority basis. That is why, the tailback of goods laden-vehicles is getting longer," he said.

The crisis cannot overcome until the new ferries are added in the fleet, said the BIWTC official.

Besides, the route is facing navigability crisis. So, the ferries require more time to cross the river. As a result, traffic tailbacks are intensifying, said Shehab Uddin, manager (commerce) at BIWTC's Daulatdia.

Judge relieved of court duties

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days after the incident happened, and so no DNA evidence could be found. "Semen cannot be traced after 72 hours..." she said.

The recommendation drew flak from different quarters and sparked protests. Many legal experts criticised the recommendation saying it would only encourage rapists.

Court sources said Judge Kamrunnahr went to her office in the Dhaka court building yesterday morning, but she did not join the court's functions.

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said her observation was embarrassing for all judges.

"A wrong directive was issued to law enforcers. For this, action against her [the judge] was extremely necessary and action has been taken. This will proceed as per the law," he told reporters at his office.

He also said a wrong message would have been dispatched had the executive and the judiciary not made their stance clear on the matter and not taken necessary steps.

Talking to The Daily Star, the ministersaid the judge's recommendation could have a serious impact on the law enforcers and the administration. "It [the recommendation] is not related to a particular case, it impacts all rape cases," said Anisul, also a criminal law expert.

Replying to a query, he said, "You will have to wait to see what happens as the chief justice asked to suspend the judicial powers of the judge."

"I will not say that this is the first instance when such suspension will come into force," he said while answering a question. "All judges deliver orders and verdicts. Some of the orders and verdicts go in favour of the government, some don't. Appeals are filed and everything proceeds as per law. Not everything is discussed by the chief justice," he said.

On Saturday, the law minister told this newspaper that his ministry would send a letter to the chief justice for

taking appropriate action against Judge Kamrunnahr.

"I will not make any comment on the judgement in the Banani Raintree Hotel rape case. But the observation made by Judge Mosammat Kamrunnahr is totally unlawful and illegal as there is no time limit in the criminal justice system for recording the case for committing a criminal offence," he said.

"I think she [Kamrunnahr] has lost the ability to hold the post of a judge because of her observation," he said.

NOTED CITIZENS SLAM RECOMMENDATION

Issuing a joint statement, 80 eminent citizens yesterday criticised the recommendation of judge Kamrunnahr in the Raintree rape case.

The recommendation contradicts the constitutional rights of women, they said in the statement, adding, "We think violence against women will rise and their possibility of getting justice will further shrink in the country because of the recommendation."

The citizens demanded a judicial probe into the trial proceedings of the Banani case. Besides, they said judges should be properly trained so that their skills increase and they can protect citizens' rights.

Those who signed the statement include Serajul Islam Choudhury, professor emeritus, Dhaka University; Meghna Guhathakurta, former member, National Human Rights Commission; Shireen Huq, member, Naripokkho; Maleka Begum, women rights activist; Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association; Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports; Hameeda Hossain, human rights activist; Shaheen Anam, executive director, Manusher Jonno Foundation; Iftekharuzzaman, executive director, Transparency International Bangladesh.

Election is now in ICU

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to the polls and 80 chairman candidates won it unopposed.

"Had the election remained open for all candidates, there would have been no chance of getting elected without contest."

The UP election in Laksam Upazila of Cumilla and Raozan Upazila of Chattogram has set a unique example of the "ideal election in the world".

As many as 65 people won unopposed to the positions of chairman, general member and reserved member for women in Laksam. In Raozan, 168 candidates won uncontested to the positions of chairman, general member and reserved member for women.

"The election was very peaceful as there were no rebel candidates or rivals in the election. If such a terror-free election can be held in the whole country, then it is enough to have a secretariat under one secretary instead of the Election Commission," he said.

In the UP polls, many returning officers felt compelled to hush up allegations of violence and violation of the electoral code of conduct due to the political reality in the area.

The UP elections can be held by forming

a separate local election authority.

"Why should the Election Commission take responsibility for the election process that is not fixed by the commission?"

But this change is a matter of political decision, he said.

The intolerant attitude of the major political parties in the country has sent democracy on the brink of demise.

"Democracy cannot exist without opposition. We want to bring democracy back to normalcy from the life support at any cost to establish a multi-party democracy. For this, everyone needs to be united."

The consensus among all political parties is needed to resolve the crisis, Talukdar said. Despite having the obligation of the constitution, no law to form an election commission was enacted in the last 50 years.

The law should be enacted in such a way that it can secure all political parties and is accepted by them.

"There will be no benefit of enacting the one-sided law. This will only pave the way for one-party rule. The issue should be resolved soon; otherwise, anarchy will be created in the country."