



For over a year now, the CDA authorities have cut up this road in the port city's Bondortila area to widen it. However, this project, meant for benefitting residents, has become a cause of their misery as a little rain now results in waterlogging in the area. In addition, this construction leaves no room for pedestrians to walk on the road. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Prevent communal violence

Progressive Cultural Forum submits memo to home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Progressive Cultural Forum submitted a memorandum to the home minister at the secretariat yesterday to prevent all forms of communalism and ensure exemplary punishment of culprits associated with incidents of communal violence.

Leaders and workers of various progressive and cultural organisations marched towards the ministry from in front of the Udichi central office.

After being stopped by the police, a delegation from the forum submitted a memorandum to the home minister.

The delegation was attended by Prof Badiur Rahman, president of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Gosti; General Secretary Amit Ranjan Dey; Zakir Hossain of Charan Cultural Centre; Golam Kibria Pinu, president of Progress Writers Association and Kamruzzaman, vice president of Charan.

They demanded impartial investigation of all the cases of teacher assault, torture, harassment and murder that have happened in the last few years.

Ex-Barishal mayor Ahsan Habib Kamal laid to rest

STAR REPORT

Ahsan Habib Kamal, BNP leader and former Barishal City Corporation mayor, was laid to rest following a namaz-e-janaza on the Barishal Zila School premises yesterday.

He passed away at nited Hospital on Saturday.

Kamal was 68 years old.

He was suffering from kidney-related complications.

Kamal is survived by wife, a son and a daughter.

PRAYER
TIMING

AUGUST 1

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:20	12:45	5:00	6:47	8:15
JAMAT 4:55	1:15	5:15	6:50	8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Small steps of empathy, long strides for change

Do Something Foundation's innovative solutions for people in need

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

For years, members of 30 Garo families living on the bank of Ganeswari river, near India's Meghalaya border in Netrakona, had to make a laborious journey to cross the river and go to the mainland.

They either had to wade through knee-to-waist-deep water or just swim, depending on the river's water level.

But a simple gesture of "Do Something Foundation" -- which donated a medium-sized, wooden boat -- has ended their chronic sufferings.

"Now we, the women, don't need to fold up our dresses or swim during monsoon to cross the river," said Sarothi Ghagra, a 50-year-old Garo woman, while describing how the boat, received last month, has helped her underprivileged community.

In late June, a team of the foundation's volunteers learnt about this community's troubles when the volunteers went to the area to distribute relief among 400 flood-hit families. This is not the only example of some of the foundation's activities.

In 2016, it started its journey by establishing the first "O A Ka Kha School" for slum children



The lives of 30 Garo families drastically changed after "Do Something Foundation" donated a boat for them to cross the Ganeswari daily. They also set up water plants for people in remote areas, inset.

in Savar. Ten students of Gonoshasthaya Samaj Vittik Medical College were behind the initiative.

Including this one, the foundation now runs four such schools in hard-to-reach areas of Satkhira and chars by the Jamuna in Sirajganj and Bogura.

"Our strategy is to respond to problems faced by individuals or any community -- especially those underprivileged, living in hard-to-reach areas -- and provide a long-term solution," Dr Nazmul Islam, the foundation's co-founder, told The Daily Star over the phone, while he was treating patients in their 55th medical camp in the flood-hit, remote Madhyannagar in Sunamganj.

Since the latest flood hit Sylhet division, volunteers of the foundation have so far distributed relief among hundreds of flood-affected people, mainly those living in remote areas.

"We don't have any big funds. As soon as we receive a request for help or learn about issues, we throw proposals to donors. We also help donors spend their aid as per their will," Nazmul said.

This initiative of young medical students has already given birth to many heart rendering stories through providing support to the poor, those with physical disabilities, as well as underprivileged women and minorities.

Last week, an elderly widow

in Nilphamari received the foundation's 410th donated tube well. Rangpur's Jaheda Begum, whose husband has mental disabilities, received a sewing machine.

Zahima Akter of Nilphamari, who has physical disabilities, received the foundation's 431st donated wheelchair, and rickshaw-puller Dulal Mia received its 75th donated home in Panchagarh.

These are just some examples of Do Something Foundation's activities.

So far, over 30,000 people have received food and warm clothes from the organisation.

The three water plants set up by the foundation in Gabura and Koikhal unions in Satkhira's Shyamnagar -- a coastal and hard-to-reach area where many women suffer health complications due to salinised water -- are arguably the most unique initiative of the foundation.

As many as 15,000 people collect drinking water from these plants at a rate of Tk 1 for five litres every day.

In June and July last year, when the country's Covid-19 patients were gasping for oxygen, the volunteers carried oxygen cylinders and provided treatment support for around 440 Covid patients in 54 districts.

The foundation has also been providing ambulance services to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Ban private coaching'

Speakers urge govt to make draft education act public

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Educationists yesterday called on the government to introduce a provision in the proposed education act banning all kinds of private tuition and coaching classes by teachers.

They also demanded that the government make the draft available to the public so that stakeholders can give recommendations before placing the draft law at a cabinet meeting.

They made the demands in a press conference organised by Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) and Education Watch at PKSF headquarters in the capital.

"Education is something for understanding, thinking and asking questions. Hence, we are strictly against guidebooks and private coaching centres as they deprive students of that scope," said Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairperson of Education Watch.

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QAZI KHOLIUZZAMAN AHMAD
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The government first took the initiative to formulate the draft education act in 2012, following national education policy 2010. The draft was completed in 2016 and published on the government website for public opinion.

As another draft act has been prepared, the authority should publish it on their website, before sending it to Cabinet Division for the stakeholders and civil society members to express their opinion or recommendation, said Qazi Kholiquzzaman, also co-chairman of National Education Policy Formulation Committee 2010.

He also demanded to know the current status of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Most city drains clogged in M'singh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Waterlogging has become a seemingly never-ending problem for the residents of Mymensingh due to poor waste management.

Locals alleged that the city goes under filthy water even after a little rain due to the poor drainage system, causing untold sufferings.

The stench from stagnant water and sewage has made living unbearable, as many city dwellers including children are forced to wade through the submerged road for lack of rickshaws and other modes of transportation.

Sewage contaminates the stagnant water because of the poor drainage system, resulting in greater health risk for the residents, according to experts.

Besides, stagnant sewage water has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes, raising alarm for a dengue outbreak.

During a recent visit to Makarjani canal on Mymensingh city's Ram Babu road, this correspondent saw that the drains were not cleaned, leading to waterlogging in adjacent areas.

Not just this sewage line, many other city drains were found in a similar condition.

"We thought the status quo would change after the government recognised Mymensingh as the country's 12th city corporation in 2018. But we're disappointed as the city drains still remain dirty, creating waterlogging," said Nurul Amin Kalam, secretary of Mymensingh Nagorik Andolon.

"The city drains and canals must be cleaned up on a regular basis," he added.



City corporation sources told this correspondent that the workforce crisis is the main reason behind this situation.

They also blamed residents for filling up waterbodies.

Contacted, MCC Executive Engineer Md Rafiqul Islam said, "Cleaning drives are going on, and they would be geared up in coming days to ease waterlogging."



Rods protruding from the front and back of a van are being transported to a construction site in Khulna yesterday. Although the authorities forbid carrying rods in this manner, this frequent practice stays in place due to a lack of monitoring. This photo was taken on Sir Iqbal Road.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN