

BNP 'deadlier than dengue'

Says info minister

UNB, Dhaka

BNP in some cases is deadlier than dengue, said Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

Mahmud, also Awami League joint general secretary, said Aedes mosquitoes bite people while BNP burns people and vehicles. "Both of them must be stopped to," he said.

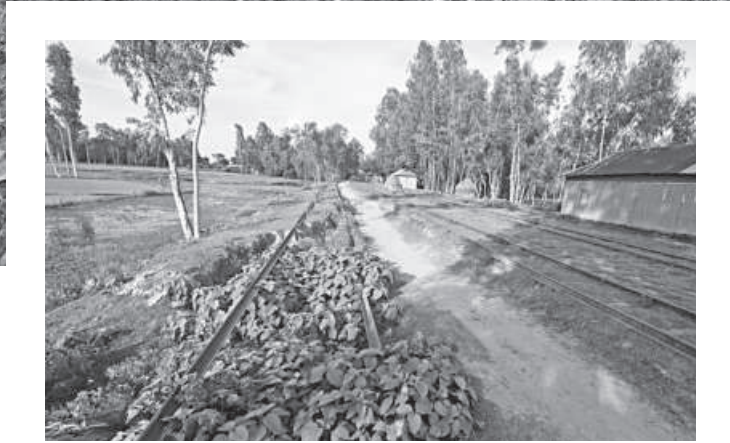
The minister was speaking as the chief guest at Bangladesh Krishak League's mosquito eradication and awareness programme at Khamarbari roundabout in the capital in the morning.

"BNP never does politics for the people," he said.

"BNP never stood by people amid dengue outbreak or flood-disaster... even during coronavirus they did not help people. They have only taken part in photo sessions..." he alleged.

"And their top leaders do not allow anyone from the party to hold any election, even if they stand for the

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The railway track from Balasighat to Trimohani Bazar in Gaibandha lies abandoned since 2015, with weeds and plants sprouting all over it. Besides, 629 farmers who gave up their lands for this track still await the promised compensation. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Cop 'shoots himself to death' in Panchagarh

UNB, Panchagarh

A constable died early yesterday hours after he shot himself with his rifle in front of Sonali Bank police box in Panchagarh town, said a police official quoting his colleagues.

The deceased was identified as Firoz Ahmed, 27, of Dinajpur's Nawabganj.

Firoz joined the Panchagarh Sonali Bank guard duty on July 31, said Panchagarh Sadar Police Station OC Abdul Latif Mia.

"On Thursday night, he shot himself with his rifle while on duty at the main branch of Panchagarh Sonali Bank in the district. Following the incident, other colleagues took him to Panchagarh Modern Sadar Hospital where duty doctor Dr Mirza Saidul Islam declared him dead," he said.

Firoz's body will be handed over to the family after autopsy, said OC Latif.

According to police sources, Firoz was talking to his wife Upoma on mobile phone. At one point, he got agitated and shot himself in the neck.

Dr Mirza Saidul Islam said his colleagues rushed him to the hospital around 2:30am on the day. He died on the way, he added.

Two bodies recovered in Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Police recovered two bodies in the capital yesterday.

Shahbagh Police Station Sub-Inspector Md Faruk Hossain found an unidentified man on the road in front of the new building of Dhaka Medical College Hospital at 10:50am and took him to the emergency department at DMCH where a duty doctor declared him dead.

Meanwhile, Paltan Police Station SI Manjurul Islam found another body on the footpath in front of Baitul Khair Building in Purana Paltan around 8:30am.

Duty doctor at DMCH declared him dead, he added.

The deceased was identified as Sunil Roy, son of Arun Roy, from Cumilla.



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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Tracks abandoned, promises unkept

Rail line lies unused for 8yrs, 629 farmers yet to get back acquired land, compensation

MOSTAFA SHABUJ

A rail line lies abandoned, where weeds now sprawl. But, behind the eerie landscape lies a deeper narrative – one of farmers' tears, broken promises and bygone days.

WHEN FERRIES USED TO CARRY TRAIN PASSENGERS

Once upon a time, the Jamuna served as a passage for railway ferries, shuttling train passengers across its waters.

The Tistamukh Bahadurabad route, initiated by the British government in 1938, witnessed ferries so vast that three train wagons could comfortably fit inside them.

Positioned on one side of the river was the Tistamukh Ghat in Gaibandha's Fulchhari Upazila, while the Bahadurabad Ghat in Jamalpur's Dewanganj Upazila lay on the other.

What's worse is the farmers who gave up their lands for the construction of the railway line have been left to bear the burden of broken promises. The railway authorities have ceased compensating them for the last 13 years, they alleged.

In 1990, the route transitioned from the Tistamukh Ghat to the Balashi Ghat in the same upazila. To facilitate rail communication in tandem with these railway ferries, the government temporarily requisitioned over 145 acres of land in 1996-97, offering compensation to the 629 farmers of Fulchhari upazila.

This land was utilised to construct a nine-kilometre rail link road from Balasighat to Trimohani Bazar.

According to the agreement, Bangladesh



Railway was obligated to compensate the farmers as long as the track remained operational, promising to return the land to them once the rail track was inactive.

However, the inauguration of the Jamuna Bridge in 1998 offered an alternate, more preferred means of transportation, rendering the ferry journey challenging, time-consuming, and uncertain due to navigability issues in the river.

Consequently, passenger ferry services ceased entirely in 2005, making the nine-km rail route redundant.

In 2015, even ferries carrying goods-laden wagons to the rail line halted entirely due to navigability challenges, resulting in a complete suspension of all types of train communication.

'WHERE IS OUR COMPESATION?'

In a recent visit, the correspondent observed that the tracks lie dormant, engulfed by encroaching houses, weeds, and makeshift mud-roads. Public properties have suffered

extensive damage, with stolen stones and severed tracks becoming a common sight, yet indifference prevails, and the situation remains unaddressed.

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Many farmers, like 67-year-old Sadekur Rahman from Kanchipara village have given up 53 decimals of their agricultural land without adequate compensation.

Despite receiving some payments initially, they have been deprived of any further financial assistance since 2010, leaving them with unresolved complexities, they added.

Momena Akhter, Sadekur's wife, said, "After receiving around Tk. 92,000 during the railway line construction, we were promised continuous compensation. However, for the

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Resign, pave way for free, fair polls

CPB asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Claiming that a free and fair election is not possible unless it is held under a non-partisan caretaker government, leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh yesterday demanded resignation of the incumbent government and dissolution of the parliament.

They made the remarks while addressing a rally organised by the Dhaka city (south) unit of the CPB at Purana Paltan.

Speakers at the rally said the government snatched away the democratic rights to protest. Fascist misrule has been imposed on the people by destroying the constitutional institutions, they alleged.

"They [the govt] have snatched people's right to vote and established a so-called constitutional dictatorship. To stay in power for life, the ruling government wants to conduct the next elections in a one-sided, unopposed, voter-less manner like in the past," they further alleged.

The speakers announced to wage a tougher movement, demanding a non-partisan government during the polls to hold the next national elections in a participatory, free and fair manner. Advisor of the CPB central committee Manzurul Ahsan Khan, CPB President Mohammad Shah Alam, General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince, former president Muzahidul Islam Selim addressed the rally.

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TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Teacher shortage bogs down academic activities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A total 33 out of 44 posts of teachers and 17 out of 26 employee posts are remaining vacant for an extended period at Moulvibazar Government Technical School and College, hampering the institution's academic and administrative activities.

Currently, only 11 teachers and a limited number of employees are shouldering the responsibilities. The post of principal is also vacant at present, according to the authorities. A chief instructor of Automobile Department is currently serving as acting principal of the institution.

The institution, established in 1965, is now struggling to conduct classes and manage administrative activities promptly amid the acute shortage of teachers and staff. The few available teachers are working tirelessly to maintain the teaching programme.

However, their efforts alone are not sufficient to provide quality education and proper support to the students.

At present 597 students are studying at the institution from sixth to 12th grade, according to sources. The institution teaches technical subjects alongside general curriculum, while offering different short-term courses as well.



Short-term courses include four months of housekeeping which has two months of academic classes. For the remaining two months, the students did hands on training in different hotels and motels. Apart from this, there is a four-month motor driving course, three-month and six-month computer office application courses for professional licences.

The vacant technical teaching positions at

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Locals unite to save century-old playground

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Residents of a remote village in Habiganj have united to save their historic playground from the possession of influential individuals who are claiming ownership of the field.

The efforts come at a time when large open playgrounds in different parts of the country are getting confiscated either by real estate companies, large corporations, or the government in the name of urbanisation.

Bazlur Rahman, Ranjit Sutradhar, and Piyush Sutradhar, all residents of the village, have claimed ownership of around 3.37 acres of the 5.37-acre playground in Rampur village of Habiganj Sadar upazila, said locals.

While Bazlur said that he owns 1.3 acres of land on that ground per the records,

Ranjit and Piyush, who are also members of Teghoria Union Parishad, claimed that the entire ground was registered in their ancestors' names, Ashwini Mohan and Rupkini Mohan Sutradhar.

However, according to the village residents and the local UP, the entire 5.37 acres of the playground are under the jurisdiction of the village panchayat.

They claimed that even though the land was earlier recorded as Ashwini and Rupkini's, the field management committee filed a case with a court against the record in 1972, and the verdict came in the committee's favour, making the current claims of Bazlur and others illegal.

Tofazzal Sohel, a local and waterkeeper of Khowai river, alleged that the ones attempting to seize the field were using fraudulent documents.

Since the court's verdict, locals have been holding various sporting activities.

Former UP member Dayamoy Sutradhar said the villagers are determined to protect the field for the youth.

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Children and youths engaged in a game of football at their beloved playground, amid the uncertainty surrounding its ownership. Three influential persons have claimed the field, although locals say the playground is under the jurisdiction of village panchayat. Inset, The villagers and representatives from Bapa have joined hands to save the playground. The photos were taken from Rampur village in Habiganj recently.

PHOTO: STAR