

12 VILLAGES IN TANGAIL

Bridge construction delay distresses residents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

The residents of at least 12 villages in Tangail's Sakhipur upazila have been suffering immensely due to a significant delay in the construction of a crucial bridge.

Only a quarter of the work has been completed so far, even though more than a year has passed since the project's completion date.

In response to the long-time demand of locals, the government decided to construct the bridge on Kalidas-GC-Bohuria UP Road at Kakrar Jora area to improve road communication there, according to the office of the Upazila Engineer in Sakhipur.

The Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) took on the task as part of its strengthening and widening upazila-union roads project.

A Dhaka-based construction firm was awarded the contract for the construction of the 25-metre bridge with a budget of Tk 2.28 crore.

The construction began on February 16, 2021, with the deadline for completion set for February 17, 2022.

However, the contractor firm stopped the work after a few months for reasons unknown, causing immense suffering for the nearby villagers who commuted

through the road, said locals.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found that only a few pillars of the bridge have been installed so far, and locals were facing difficulties passing through the construction site on the road, which is in a deteriorated condition.

Rafiqul Islam from Kakrar Jora village mentioned that vehicular movement, except for motorcycles, remains suspended at that location, forcing locals to take alternative routes that add 15-20 extra kilometres to their journey, incurring additional time and expenses.

Teachers at local educational institutions stated that students are having difficulty reaching classes on time due to disruptions in road communication caused by the incomplete bridge.

Saiful Islam and Hafizur Rahman, traders at local Karutiapara and Kalidas markets, expressed their inability to transport goods as goods-laden vehicles cannot use the road until the bridge is completed.

Sarkar Nure Alam, chairman of Bohuria Union Parishad, urged the authorities concerned to take prompt measures to complete the construction work as soon as possible, considering the people's suffering.

When contacted, Abdul Based, the

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

Locals struggle to pass through the deteriorated road near the incomplete bridge, with only a few pillars in place. The photo was taken recently.

TRAINING CENTRE FOR ORPHANS, DISABLED

Barely runs amid shortage of trainers

Equipment decaying

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

A vocational training centre for orphans and girls with special needs in Moulvibazar is barely operational amid an acute shortage of trainers and with poorly functioning equipment.

The institution, which started its activities in 2013 in Matarkapan area of Chandnighat union in Sadar upazila, currently has 11 of its 15 posts lying vacant for long while two staff members are serving elsewhere on deputation, leaving only two staffers to run academic and administrative activities at the centre amid severe operational challenges.



The centre aims to provide training and lodging to orphans and girls with special needs, who are either meritorious or come from poor families, at absolutely no cost. The entry requirement for trainees is to be within the age of 15 to 25 and having at least passed eighth grade.

Only two subjects at the centre are currently being taught. Since the center's inception, the equipment has deteriorated due to the absence of trainers, and there is a scarcity of sewing machines and computers.

The centre has six training subjects approved by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB): computer office applications, housekeeping and laundry, dress making and tailoring, block batik and printing embroidery, driving and auto mechanics, and certificate in beautification. Each subject has 30 seats for trainees to enrol. However, only computer office applications, and dress making and tailoring courses are currently operational under tutelage of contractual trainers, with 27 and 20 trainees respectively.

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4.4 magnitude earthquake jolts Sylhet

STAR REPORT

A 4.4-magnitude earthquake jolted Sylhet and its adjoining areas yesterday afternoon.

The earthquake was felt at 4:18pm, Farzana Sultana, assistant meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, told The Daily Star.

The earthquake's epicentre was in Assam, India, 263km away from the Dhaka Seismic Centre, she added.

There was no immediate report of casualties or damage.

PRAYER
TIMING

SEPTEMBER 10

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:30	6:14	7:45
JAMAT 5:10	1:15	4:45	6:17	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

VIOLENCE AFTER SHUTTLE ACCIDENT

Preplanned vandalism or outburst of anger?

Chaos in CU raise questions about motives amidst long-standing students grievances

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

The recent incident of protests and vandalism following the shuttle train accident at Chittagong University's campus has raised questions about whether it was a preplanned act or an outburst of long-standing anger towards university authorities.

Law enforcement officials have characterised the rampage and vandalism at the Vice-Chancellor's residence and the vehicle depot as premeditated actions carried out by masked individuals with sharp weapons. They suggest that the extent of the vandalism indicates a possible act of vengeance against the Vice-Chancellor.

On the other hand, some students, who chose to remain anonymous due to fear of repercussions, assert that the chaos was not driven by a desire for revenge but rather by their frustration with the university administration's failure to address their demands. These demands included better transportation options, such as more shuttle trains, to ease commuting to and from the university.

Senior teachers at Chittagong University have also weighed in, stating that the incident was a result of the administration's failure to address students' long-standing requests for improved transportation services. They criticise the university administration for its handling of the situation, suggesting that

the Proctor's failure to direct local police exacerbated the mayhem.

At least 16 people, mostly students of the university, were injured after being hit by tree branches while traveling on the roof of a Chittagong University shuttle train on Thursday night.

Of them, three, two from CU, are currently fighting for their life at the ICU of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

“The running administration failed to address students' longtime demand for shuttle trains.”

CUTA STATEMENT

After the news of the accident broke, the angered students gathered at the Zero Point area of CU and locked down the main gate of the university, before holding the CU Proctorial body hostage and vandalising the police box, teachers' club, VC's residence, and nearly 35 buses of CU at the transport office, according to witnesses.

A group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists, mostly juniors, also took part in the demonstration, they added.

CU Proctor Nurul Azim Sikdar did not respond despite several attempts to contact him over phone.

WHAT DO POLICE SAY

After the chaos, senior police officials including the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Chattogram visited the CU campus on Friday.

“We have visited the campus and talked to the witnesses and started an investigation. We have started collecting the CCTV footage to identify the miscreants,” Additional Superintendent of Police (DB) Sudipta Sarkar of Chattogram told The Daily Star yesterday.

“In the CCTV footage, we found that the miscreants who vandalised the bus depot and VC's residence were wearing masks. It is clear that they knew the locations of CCTV cameras so that they covered their faces with masks to hide their identity,” a top police official said, seeking anonymity.

“We are also digging into the political identity of the attackers,” he added.

Additional SP Sudipta Sarkar said filing of three cases in this connection was underway with Hathazari Police Station.

CUTA STANDS WITH STUDENTS Meanwhile, CU Teachers' Association (CUTA) claimed that the incident took place due to the failure of the university administration. “The running administration failed to address students' longtime demand for shuttle trains,” reads a statement issued by CUTA.

The Proctor failed to direct local police to deal with the situation, resulting in the mayhem, said a senior teacher of the Social Science Faculty wishing anonymity.

Interestingly, CUTA in its written statement did not mention anything about the vandalism at VC's residence, but mentioned about the bus depot.

Two die as truck hits bike on Abdullahpur

UNB, *Keraniganj*

Two youths died and another sustained injuries as a truck crashed into the motorbike carrying them on Abdullahpur flyover in Keraniganj of Dhaka early yesterday.

The identities of the deceased could not be known yet.

Sirajdikhan Highway Police Station's sub-inspector Asifuzzaman Asif said the accident occurred around 12:00am on the flyover on Dhaka-Mawa Road, leaving two bikers dead on the spot and another injured.

The injured youth is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

He said they were trying to know the identities of the deceased aged between 25 and 30, and the bodies were sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Md Bachhu Mia, in-charge of the DMCH police outpost, quoting physicians said that the condition of the injured youth is stated to be critical.

An unnatural death case was filed with Dakkhin Keraniganj Police Station in this regard.

Three held with 1.10 lakh Yaba pills

UNB, *Cox's Bazar*

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) detained three drug peddlers along with 1.10 lakh Yaba pills from the zero point of Teknaf bordering area in Cox's Bazar district on Friday night.

The detainees were Tajul islam, 53, son of Mohammad Hossain, Syed Hossain, 35, son of Sona Ali and Abul Kashem, 45, son of Zakum Bahar of Teknaf upazila.

Based on secret information that a big consignment of drugs will be smuggled into the country from Myanmar, a team of BGB 2 conducted a drive in the area and challenged five people who were trying to cross the border through the zero point, said a press release of BGB yesterday.

They tried to flee the scene but BGB members managed to detain three people at 10:30 pm, it added. The detainees were handed over to Teknaf Police Station.

Farmers unhappy over low jute price

UNB, *Kurigram*

Jute farmers in Kurigram are facing a bleak situation as its prices continue to decline despite a good harvest this year and many of them are thinking of leaving jute cultivation for good from the next season.

Farmers said although the prices were good at the beginning of the season, they have significantly dropped.

The dire situation faced by jute farmers has raised concerns about the sustainability of jute cultivation in the region, as many are questioning the economic viability of continuing to grow this important cash crop.

The current market price of jute is between Tk 1800 to Tk 2000per maund. Farmers are getting worried about whether they will be able to get their investment back.

Talking to UNB, some jute farmers said that they may have to give up jute cultivation in the next season due to such a slump in the prices.

A visit to the bustling jute market in Jatrapur, Kurigram's Sadar Upazila,

reveals the gravity of the situation. Farmers from far and wide have arrived with their jute crops, using various means of transportation, including boats, bicycles, and horse-drawn carts.

However, the disappointment is palpable as they learn about the low prices of their jute. Compared to the previous week's market, jute prices have plummeted by Tk300-400 per maund, leaving farmers with negligible profits.

Md Noor Islam, a farmer who came to the market from Kadamtala village of Kurigram Sadar said, “Cultivating jute on one bigha of land costs Tk 14000 to Tk 15000 including fertilizer, water, pesticides and the labour costs. I get 8-10 maunds of jute from one bigha of land. There will be no profit if I sell the product at current price. What is the benefit of cultivating jute with so much difficulty then?”

Another farmer, Md Hasanur, said, “The price of jute has not been very good for the past couple of years. There has not been sufficient rain this season, we had to use extra water in the dry season that raised the production cost.”

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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Fifteen female footballers were injured on their way to a match after a shallow engine-run three-wheeler carrying them overturned and fell into a crop field in Joypurhat's Akkelpur upazila yesterday. The injured, who are currently schooling with Tilakpur Adarsha Girls High School, are currently undergoing treatment at the upazila health complex.