



The under-construction building of Natakhol Police Investigation Centre in Manikganj's Harirampur upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

NATAKHOLA POLICE PROBE CENTRE

Construction work stops for fund crisis

ZAHANGIR SHAH, Manikganj

Construction work of Natakhol Police Investigation Centre has remained incomplete for the last couple of months.

Manikganj Public Works Department (PWD) suspended the construction work in Harirampur upazila due to fund crisis.

Earlier, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal formally inaugurated the police investigation centre on July 21, 2023, though about 20 percent work of the under-construction building still remain pending.

Locals said although the probe centre supposed to have 21 members, including an in-charge, nothing has been done so far to run it even after seven months of inauguration.

The door-less building is currently lying abandoned.

During a recent visit to the incomplete building, this correspondent saw some youths were roaming on different floors of the four-storied building as the contractor yet to setup all the doors.

Though sanitary and fittings works of the building has been done to some extent, its electrical work still remain



incomplete till now.

Not only the colour of the building is fading away, one can notice many brick chips and debris are lying scattered on the floors of different rooms.

Besides, part of the main gate was also seen lying broken at the entrance of the newly constructed building.

A youth, seeking anonymity, said, "A major incident can occur at any time as many young boys and girls from different places passes their leisure time inside the abandoned building every day."

Housewife Aleya Begum of Natakhol

area said as the building has been lying abandoned for long many teenagers take drugs inside it freely.

"At least 13 cattle have been stolen from different houses of the village in the past, so I was really happy to hear that we are going to get a police investigation centre here," she said, adding that but the construction work has not been completed yet due to unknown reason.

Harirampur Upazila Parishad Chairman Dewan Saidur Rahman said the Padma river has separated over one lakh people living at different villages under

Lechhraganj, Sutarari and Azimnagar unions from the mainland.

Moreover, four unions of Faridpur are also located in the same char areas.

Incidents like cattle theft and land disputes often occur in the remote char areas, surrounded by the Padma river, the UP chairman said.

Following repeated demand of local residents, the government took the initiative to construct the police investigation centre at Natakhol.

Abul Bashar Sabuj, former vice chairman of Harirampur Upazila Parishad, said local people are still not getting any benefit as work of the under construction building is yet to be completed.

Manikganj PWD Executive Engineer Sharmin Akter said construction work of the four-storey police investigation centre in Natakhol, spending nearly Tk 3.80 crore, has been suspended due to lack of fund.

Though a total of Tk 2.55 crore has already been spent, about Tk 1.25 crore more is required to complete the remaining work, he added.

Meeting Yahya

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House, although Yahya was quite welcome to visit him at his residence. [Kamal Hossain, Bangladesh: Quest for Freedom and Justice, UPL, 2013, pg.91]

THE MILITARY BUILD UP CONTINUES

The influx of troops from West Pakistan into Dhaka continued in the early days of March 1971. PIA's fleet of Boeing aircraft transported the troops. Due to India's embargo on over-flights, all Pakistani aircraft had to take a detour via Sri Lanka. The 9 Division from Quetta, under Major General Nazir Hussain Shah, and the 17 Division from Kharian under Major General Shaukat Riza, were being deployed.

East Pakistani leaders, including Sheikh Mujib and Bhashani, continued to protest the military build-up. They called upon people not to support the movement of military convoys across the country.

The military buildup in East Pakistan was seen by Indians as a tactic to coerce the Bengalis into diluting their demands. [Srinath Raghavan, 1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh, Permanent Black, 2013, pg. 58]

SANGRAM PARISHAD DIRECTIVES

Swadhin Bangla Desh Kendrio Chattro Sangram Parishad, in a statement issued today, warned hoarders, smugglers, and conspirators of stern action if they do not desist from their evil-mongering immediately. They also directed oil suppliers not to provide oil to those who were conspiring against the liberation struggle of Bangla Desh.

National Assembly member Jahiruddin renounced his title "Hilali-Quaid-i-Azam" today in response to the call of Chhatra Sangram Parishad.

Govt removes

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Saifur Rahman Siddique Saif, who was assaulted during the violence, filed a case with Shahbagh Police Station, naming independent candidate Nahid Sultana Juthi, a pro-BNP lawyer and secretary candidate Ruhul Quddus Kazal, and 18 others.

Meanwhile, police arrested six lawyers, including Kazal and Kazi Bashir Ahmed, from different parts of the capital in connection with the case, and the court placed Kazal on a four-day remand and the rest five on a three-day remand for interrogation.

Another 179 BGP

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some other locals went to see the BGP members in the afternoon.

The bullet hit Saber in his waist. Nurul Absar Imon, chairman of Sadar Union Parishad, said that when people gathered near Jamchhari mosque in the border area around 5:00pm, a bullet from Myanmar hit Saber.

The injured was sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, he added.

On February 15, a total of 330 Myanmar nationals, who crossed the border and took refuge in Bangladesh to escape the fighting between the Myanmar junta and the Arakan Army, were sent back to their country.

They included 302 BGP members, four family members of the BGP personnel, two army personnel, 18

Editors' Council

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purchased under the Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Subsequently on March 5, an altercation ensued after the journalist was not provided with the information. The UNO then set up a mobile court and sent him to jail for six months, the Council said.

His bail was delayed by late submission of documents, it added.

"The usual tendency of government officials to flaunt their power has been manifested through sending a journalist to jail by setting up a mobile court. The procedure of getting bail is being deliberately prolonged, though it is the minimum legal rights in case of any offence," reads the statement issued by Editors' Council President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud on its behalf.

Mobile courts have the arbitrary power to punish an accused without giving them any scope to defend themselves. And the executive magistrate then can send the accused to jail after a one-sided interrogation. As a result, after being arrested under the Mobile Court Act, a person inevitably lands in jail, said the statement.

"The use of the act against media employees must be stopped for the sake of free speech and free media. We demand an immediate end to the use of this law against media and

immigration members, and four civilians.

The Myanmar citizens started fleeing to Bangladesh on February 4 as the fighting between the Myanmar junta force and the Arakan Army escalated across the border in Bandarban and Cox's Bazar.

The BGP members disarmed them and took them into custody.

At least 68 of them -- of which 15 were bullet-hit -- took shelter in Bangladesh on February 4, and the rest entered on different dates until February 7.

During the fighting along the border areas, a Bangladeshi woman and a Rohingya man were killed when a mortar shell fired from Myanmar exploded in Bandarban's Ghumdhum on February 5.

No Ramadan relief

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journalists," the statement added. The Editors' Council also demanded actions against those who grossly misused this law out of vengeance and for their personal interest.

"We believe that the Information Commission, which visited Sherpur, will unearth the fact through investigation."

Journalists' Council

Goods that are available are sold at exorbitant prices, residents say. A Spanish charity vessel laden with food was set to sail from Cyprus to Gaza but faced delays, with Cypriot state media saying the platform to receive the aid in Gaza was not ready.

The non-governmental group Open Arms said its boat was expected to tow a barge with 200 tonnes of food, but a spokeswoman could not confirm when it would depart.

Fighting raged across Gaza, even as United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for "silencing the guns" during Ramadan which he said celebrates "peace, reconciliation and solidarity."

Foreign firms

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international standard," Hamid said. The new PSC has set the gas price at 10 percent of the Brent Crude price, meaning the price will be linked with the crude oil price in the international market.

"It will create interest among the oil companies," Hamid added.

Petrobangla Chairman Zanendra Nath Sarker presented the lucrative points in the new PSC, saying the contracts will be signed with the interested companies for nine years.

"But we relaxed it this time. We divided the tenure into three phases -- the initial study phase will be four years, then the exploration phase of two years and another three years for subsequent exploration."

No duty will be taken from the IOCs for the import of machinery and equipment during all the phases, Nath said, adding that Petrobangla will bear the income tax liability of the companies as well.

At the press conference, the organisers evaded answering at least three questions related to geopolitical issues, provision of gas export and whether the country's interest will be hampered in making the PSC lucrative for IOCs.

"It will be a win-win situation for both Bangladesh and the IOCs," Nath said.

Bangladesh is a fast-growing economy, said Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, the prime minister's energy advisor. "Moody termed our economy as stable. All the situation is in our favour to get investors," he said.

Journo beaten

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me and snatched my camera, mobile phone, and wallet."

"My colleagues rescued me and admitted me to Bakshiganj Upazila Health Complex," he added.

Contacted, Councillor Kamruzzaman Sujon, claimed, "Matin was recording a video of a meeting being held at my home. I told him not to film, but he did not listen. Then my supporter Touhid got into an argument with Matin, but he did not beat him."

Abdul Ahad Khan, officer-in-charge of Bakshiganj Police Station, said, "We heard that a journalist was attacked, but we don't know the details."

A close call for US-Bangla

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line before the runway. Planes are not supposed to get on the runway without explicit permission to do so.

Seventeen seconds after the US Bangla plane was given clearance to taxi, the air-traffic controller was heard screaming "Bangla Star hold position!"

Bangla Star is US Bangla's callsign.

Eye-witnesses said the US Bangla plane had begun crossing the holding point and getting on the runway with the Arirang flight about to touch down.

The air-traffic controller continued yelling "hold position" several times over and over for another 19 seconds, before cancelling the Arirang plane's landing permission and asking it to go around and attempt to land again.

All this happened in just 48 seconds.

The pilot of the US Bangla aircraft went on to explain that he was permitted to get on the runway, according to the recording.

The air traffic officer took over the radio from the controller and said that he was right beside the controller when the clear instruction to hold was issued.

The pilot of US Bangla aircraft then said, "Ok sir my apology holding position now. It was a mistake we are holding now."

An audibly distraught air traffic controller continued yelling, "Very very dangerous because the traffic was on short final hover. Traffic is light traffic; that's why they were able to go around."

"Short final" refers to the final approach of the plane before its wheels touch the runway.

Aviation experts listening to the recording said that "light traffic" refers to the fact that the Arirang plane was a small chartered aircraft.

The US Bangla plane however was a Boeing 737-800 with the capacity to carry as many as 189 passengers.

What happened on January 18 are called a runway incursion and pilot deviation. A disaster was averted as the ATC could see the US Bangla plane.

Yet, no air safety report was filed even though the ATC said on the record how dangerous it was and the pilot admitting that he had made a mistake.

The Daily Star also spoke to the cockpit crew of the Arirang flight who confirmed that they were ordered to

Patuakhali roads in bad shape for long

SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Almost half of the total paved roads in Patuakhali's two upazilas -- Galachipa and Dashmina -- have been in a poor condition and become unfit for vehicular movements due to lack of renovation for long.

As a result, thousands of people living in those two upazilas have been experiencing untold suffering for years.

The situation becomes more worsen during the rainy season as heavy vehicles often get stuck in the large potholes developed on those awful roads, locals said.

According to sources at Patuakhali Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) Office, about 235 kilometres paved roads out of a total of 602 kilometres roads in Galachipa and Dashmina upazila are in bad shape.

The two upazilas also have a total of 2,204 kilometres rural or unpaved roads.

Due to lack of renovation work for long about 150km out of the 409km paved roads in Galachipa upazila are in bad shape.

Apart from this, about 85km out of 193km roads in Dashmina are also in an awful condition for years.

During a recent visit this correspondent found that the 20km road, stretching from Ratanditali union parishad (UP) to Char Bishwas UP Office in Galachipa upazila, is one of the worst affected roads in the upazila.

Alongside developing numerous potholes, carpeting of the road has also worn-out at many places.

Kabir Hossain of Kheaghat area in Ratanditali union said several thousand residents of three unions use the 20km road to go to Galachipa upazila headquarters, but no renovation work has been done to fix the dilapidated road in the last couple of years.

Sayem Gazi, a member of Char Biswas UP, said condition of the 5.5km road from Kalikapur to Panpatti, and the 20km road, connecting Galachipa and Kalagachhia union is also in an awful condition for long.

Away in Dashmina upazila, one can see the 10km road from Amtala to Mollarhaat is full of numerous potholes. Hemayet Uddin, a student at Dakshin Adamapura Secondary School, said due to the worn-out condition of the important road they often have to suffer while going to and from the school during the rainy season.

Dashmina Upazila Engineer Maqbul Hossain said most of the roads in the upazila are in sorry state as no renovation work has been conducted since those were constructed several years ago. Patuakhali LGED Superintendent Engineer Mohammad Hossain Ali Mir said at least Tk 100 crore is required to renovate nearly 235km roads in Galachipa and Dashmina upazilas.

go around. Their flight pattern is also publicly available on flight tracking websites.

CAAB's Aircraft Accident Investigation Committee's head Captain Salahuddin M Rahmatullah confirmed that there was no investigation going.

"If there was an air safety report, we would have investigated," he said. When contacted, US Bangla Chairperson Kamrul Islam said, "I do not know about this incident."

Civil Aviation Association Bangladesh's "Manual on the Runway Incursions and Collision Avoidance" states "It should be ensured that all runway incursions are reported and investigated in sufficient detail to identify specific causal and contributory factors."

The manual defines a "narrow miss" as the severest form of runway incursion.

CAAB's manual states that one of the things that needs to be investigated in case of a runway incursion is a "breakdown in communications leading to failure to follow an air traffic control instruction".

In last July, there was a near miss on the runway of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, when a Biman aircraft got on the runway when another plane was about to touch down.

Officials in Biman told The Daily Star that they had launched an investigation and had grounded the two pilots.

Ramadan

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that Ramadan will begin from today.

After the meeting, Religious Affairs Secretary Md A Hamid Zamadar confirmed this to The Daily Star.

Muslims fast from dawn to dusk during the month of Ramadan to practice restraint, piety, and generosity.

The government already set the office timing for Ramadan from 9:00am to 3:30pm for all government, semi-government, autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions. There will be a break from 1:15pm to 1:30pm for Zohr prayers.

Taraweh prayers began last night.

As per the decision of the committee, Shab-e-Qadr will be observed in the country on the night of April 6.