



Illegal sand extraction plagues Dharla, two other rivers

Erosion devours croplands, homes in Patgram upazila

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Illegal stone and sand extraction has caused severe erosion in three transboundary rivers — Dharla, Singimari, and Saniajan. Visiting the river banks in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat recently, this correspondent saw sand and stones piled up on the banks after extraction with dredger machines, while large holes were formed on the river beds.

Locals complained that indiscriminate sand extraction is causing riverbank erosion, subsequent flash floods during monsoons, and damage to croplands, homes, biodiversity, and livelihoods.

Dharla is about 31.5 kilometres long on the Bangladesh side, while Singimari is 21km and Saniajan 4km long, according to Bangladesh Water Development Board.

In fiscal year 2017-18, the BWDB completed 4km of excavation and 2.5km of embankment protection works at a cost of Tk 24.72 crore on the rivers, the officials added.

"Dharla's erosion devoured my homestead, 10 bighas of my arable lands, and also the village graveyard. Like me, many others lost everything to the river," said Nazrul Islam, 77, a farmer in Patgram's Rasulganj village.

Many locals have alleged that a section of ruling party leaders are patronising the sand lifters. They are colluding with dishonest officials in the administration to extract sand and stones illegally.

With change of power, the rivers also change hands, but their fate remains unchanged, they said.

Ruhul Amin Babul, general secretary of Patgram upazila AL and also the upazila chairman, said illegal sand lifters are criminals, and their political identity is irrelevant. "They

change their allegiance with the change of power. They don't belong to any political party," he said.

Strict action should be taken against these people, he added. Shahidul Islam, 65, a farmer from the same village, said,

"At present, some 400-500 dredger machines are being used to lift stones and sand round the clock from the rivers."

Nazir Ali, 78, of Banglabari village, called upon authorities concerned to take strict measures to bring the culprits to book.

Contacted, Abdul Gaffar, upazila agriculture officer in Patgram, said, "Many families who were engaged in agriculture lost their croplands to river erosion. This, in turn, adversely affected the area's agricultural productivity. However, there has

been no survey done on how much arable land was lost to river erosion."

MA Momin, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Lalmonirhat and member secretary of the district's National River Protection Committee, said, "The district and upazila administrations are firmly against illegal sand and stone extraction from the rivers."

Shunil Kumar, executive engineer of BWDB in Lalmonirhat, said, "Local administration will take legal action against the culprits. Proposals have been sent to the government for dredging Singimari and Saniajan rivers. For Dharla river, the government will decide on necessary measures."

Nurul Islam, UNO of Patgram upazila, said, "The upazila administration has conducted numerous mobile court drives. Although these illegal activities have mostly stopped, there are reports of some stone lifting at night. Our drives will continue."

When asked about the allegation that some officials are involved in sand lifting, he denied it.



Madrasa student missing for 15 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A student of a madrasa in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila has been missing for 15 days now, since May 16.

The missing student is Alauddin Sarkar Apan of Malitari Ta'limul Quran Rahmaniya Hafizia Madrasa in Harati union of the upazila.

Apan's father Jarip Ullah lodged a general diary with Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station in this connection on May 22.

Jarip said Apan went missing from the madrasa on May 16 noon, but the teachers did not inform him. He went to visit his son on May 20 and came to know that Apan was missing.

"I have heard that the madrasa's superintendent had beaten up my son, but they are not telling me the reason," Jarip also alleged.

Contacted, Osman Gaani, superintendent of the madrasa, claimed that Apan was not beaten up and his father was informed the day after he went missing.

"Apan had disappeared from the madrasa twice before and later returned. We are also looking for him at different places," he added.

Police are searching for the missing student, said Omar Faruk, officer-in-charge of the police station.

POLLS CODE VIOLATION 2 BCL leaders jailed, UP chairman fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A mobile court in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila has sentenced two local leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League to seven days' imprisonment for violating electoral code of conduct.

They are: Abdullah Al Fahad, senior joint convener of upazila unit of BCL, and Ishad Ahmed Mallick Nishad, former member of Warshi union unit of BCL.

The mobile court of executive magistrate Masudur Rahman, also assistant commissioner (Land) in the upazila, also fined local Warshi Union Parishad Chairman Mahbul Alam Mallick Tk 10,000 over similar charges.

Masudur Rahman caught the convicts red-handed while distributing biryani among people after a meeting on Friday afternoon, ahead of the Mirzapur Upazila Parishad polls slated for June 5.

An altercation ensued between the executive magistrate and the convicts. Informed, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Mirzapur Sheikh Nurul Amin went to the spot around 8:00pm and ordered the trio to be taken to the UNO office. Later, around 11:00pm, they were handed down the punishments under Section 32(1) of the Upazila Parishad Election Code of Conducts of 2016. The two BCL men were taken to jail around 1:00am, confirmed Masudur Rahman.

Additional police personnel were deployed as supporters and associates of the convicts gathered at the UNO office premises.

3 killed, 5 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least three people have been killed and five others injured in accidents in two districts, according to reports from our local correspondents.

In Sirajganj, two people were killed and three others injured as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw and a truck collided in Alokdiar area of Sadar upazila on Friday night.

Mohadeb Shah, 60, of Hat-Pangashi village in Raiganj upazila; and Abu Obaida, 24, of village Muktagarhi in Sirajganj Sadar upazila died on the spot.

Sirajganj Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Sirajul Islam said the accident took place around 10:00pm on Friday. The injured were undergoing treatment at Sirajganj 250-bed Bongomata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib General Hospital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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Chief Engineer
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Soydabad, Sirajganj

Ref: 27.28.8878.007.07.002.19.243 Date: 01/06/2024

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

The following e-Tender has been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1	920979	Construction of RCC road inside Sirajganj Power Station.	30/05/2024	19/06/2024, 03:30 PM	20/06/2024, 12:00 PM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Engr. Md. Shafiqul Islam
Chief Engineer
Sirajganj Power Station
NWPGCL, Soydabad, Sirajganj
Contact No.: +8801755630007

GD- 912

Build cold storage facilities in Rangpur region Demand local farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The Krishak Sangram Parishad has called for a special allocation in the upcoming national budget to construct cold storage facilities for potatoes and vegetables in the Rangpur region.

This demand was raised at a human chain formed in front of Rangpur Press Club yesterday.

Lawyer Palash Kanti Nag, convener of Krishak Sangram Parishad, addressed the gathering.

Speakers said there was an urgent need for cold storage facilities in Rangpur and Dinajpur, pointing out that the lack of such infrastructure results in an annual loss of Tk 10,000 crores due to rotting vegetables. Without adequate cold storage, 30 percent of vegetables produced in this area are wasted yearly.

They said total vegetable demand in the country stands at 1.52 crore tonnes annually. Insufficient government cold storage facilities compel farmers to sell their produce at extremely low prices to avoid spoilage.

Palash Kanti criticised the reduction in agricultural subsidies and allocations in recent budgets, stressing the necessity of ensuring fair prices for farmers.

He also demanded interest-free loans on easy terms for farmers.

Following the rally, a procession marched the main road of the city, with participation from marginal-level farmers from various areas of Rangpur city.

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GD- 910

16 dengue patients hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka

Sixteen people were hospitalised with dengue fever in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of the new patients, nine were admitted to hospitals in Dhaka city and the rest outside it, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Currently, 113 patients are receiving treatment at different hospitals across the country.

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Tender ID No	Package No.	Name of Work/Package Description	Last Selling date & time	Opening date & time	Remarks
993146	e-GP/31/EE/SRD/2023-2024.	Pavement Maintenance work by Aggregate Base Type-I & DBS wearing-course of Mostafapur-Madaripur-Shariatpur (Monohar Bazar)-Ibrahimpur-Horina-Chandpur (Bhatialpur) Road (R-860) at 31km (P) under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year-2023-2024.	16-06-2024 16:00 AM	13-06-2024 14: 00 PM	Only online tender.
993173	e-GP/32/EE/SRD/2023-2024.	Pavement Maintenance work by Aggregate Base Type-I, II & DBS-wearing course of Mostafapur-Madaripur-Shariatpur (Monohar Bazar)-Ibrahimpur-Horina-Chandpur (Bhatialpur) Road (R-860) at 37 km (P) under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year-2023-2024.	12-06-2024 16:00 AM	13-06-2024 14: 30 PM	Only online tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

(Sheikh Nabil Hossain)
ID No-602255
Executive Engineer(c.c.), RHD
Road Division, Shariatpur.

GD- 908