



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Workers load bags of fly ash, imported from India, onto trucks. For each truck they load, the group is paid Tk 1,200. Fifteen workers load around eight trucks per day, meaning the group earns Tk 9,600, leaving each worker with Tk 640 to their name. This labour intensive task often leads to these workers suffering from respiratory problems and other diseases. The photo was taken at Chai Point in Khulna recently.

'Be united to ease misery of Gazans'

Foreign minister calls for strong Muslim Ummah

UNB, Gazipur

Criticising the Israeli occupation in Gaza, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said what's going on in Gaza is unbearable and such incidents occur because of lack of unity among Muslim Ummah.

He made the remarks at the 36th convocation of the Islamic University of Technology in Gazipur yesterday morning.

Addressing students, the minister said, "Currently, people have become self-centered. As a result, humanity is nonexistent now. I urge you not to become like machines."

The convocation ceremony, held at the university's auditorium, was presided over by Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Rafiqul Islam.

Organisers said 543 students from 14 countries graduated in the convocation. Of them, 480 were from Bangladesh and 63 international students.

WATERLOGGED KULaura HEALTH COMPLEX

Walkway brings relief to patients, visitors

MINTU DESHWARA

Persistent rain in Kulaura of Moulvibazar district has left the upazila health complex severely flooded over the past 15 days.

The entire area is now waterlogged, causing immense hardship for patients and their families.

In response to this crisis, a group of volunteers took swift action and constructed a temporary 250-foot walkway in front of the hospital. This initiative has greatly alleviated the suffering of those affected, earning widespread praise from locals.

Three traders of Kulaura took the initiative to construct the makeshift platform on the upazila health complex premises.

They are Atiqur Rahman Akhoi, Iqbal Hossain Sumon and Abdul Qayyum.

Seeing their initiative, members of some social organisations also came forward with support. The long walkway was built with everyone's efforts, said locals.

Dipak Biswas, a relative of a patient, said he was regularly getting sick after having to cross knee-deep dirty water in the hospital yard. If he crossed using a rickshaw, then he had to pay triple the regular fare. However, this

platform has alleviated the issue.

Mihta Mia, a resident of East Karergram area, said her grandson was admitted to the hospital due to pneumonia. It was difficult for her to travel to the hospital amidst flooding for over five days.

Now, she is able to visit her grandson without any challenges.

Another patient's relative,

By doing this, people's suffering was reduced to some extent.

Even during the flood of 2022, the traders association took the same initiative in this hospital, he added.

Dr Ferdous Akhtar, upazila health and family planning officer in Kulaura, said as the hospital premises is about one and a half feet lower than the main road, waterlogging



Husna Begum said her daughter was under treatment in the hospital for four days. She had already spent excessive rickshaw fare a few times to visit her daughter. However, construction of the platform spared her further unnecessary expenses.

Atiqur Rahman Akhoi said the walkway was built voluntarily.

occurs even if it rains a little.

In the last financial year, a proposal was sent to the ministry through the health engineering department to raise the drain and road in front of the hospital, but it was not addressed, she said.

The matter has been informed to the local lawmaker, she added.

Heavy vehicles putting Teesta bridge in danger

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Due to excessive plying of stone-laden trucks, the Sheikh Hasina Teesta Bridge over the Teesta river and its connecting roads are getting dilapidated and risky.

Even two months ago, the 15-kilometre connecting roads on both sides of the bridge had three barrier posts to prevent heavy vehicles from plying it. The authorities of Local Government Engineering Department removed those and opened the bridge to all types of vehicles.

Since then, around 300 trucks, loaded with 30-50 tonnes of stones each from Burimari Land Port, started using the bridge daily. Due to this, the bitumen cover of the bridge's road, as well as of the connecting roads, is getting removed, leaving the road surface dilapidated and prone to accidents, said locals.

Kakina-Mahipur road is a very important route for residents and traders of four upazilas in Lalmonirhat to connect to the land port and other areas including Rangpur city.

More than 10,000 light vehicles ply the bridge daily.

Since the past two months, the bridge and connecting roads have become risky for lighter vehicles due to the damage

to the roads caused by the stone-laden trucks.

The 850-metre bridge was constructed over the Teesta River at a cost of about Tk 131 crore at Mahipur in Rangpur's Gangachhara upazila.

The prime minister inaugurated it on September 16, 2018. Its connecting roads were widened and renovated spending over Tk 22 crore this year.

"Businesspersons with political backing pressed the LGED authorities to remove the barrier posts and allow heavy vehicles to ply the bridge and use the connecting roads.

The move has led to the roads getting damaged and making it risky for lighter vehicles," said Shamsul Alam, a trader in Mahipur area.

Nazrul Islam, a truck driver, said, "We use this route as it reduces our distance by around 50km, saving us time and money, instead of going to Rangpur through Lalmonirhat town. There is also no toll on the bridge, which benefits us."

Contacted, Mohammad Shahjahan Ali, executive engineer of LGED in Rangpur, said, "We are taking preparations to repair the bridge's bitumen cover. Also, heavy vehicles will be barred from using the bridge. A meeting was held at Rangpur divisional commissioner's office in this regard recently."



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Mithachhara on DEATHBED

Excavated 4 years back, siltation and encroachment fill up canal again

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The Bangladesh Water Development Board excavated a six-kilometre stretch of Mithachhara canal in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila in 2019 at a cost of Tk 49.96 lakh.

However, within just four years, the canal has been filled up with silt, hindering its flow of water and triggering waterlogging in adjacent areas.

The seven-kilometre-long canal, which flows through the upazila and

Chittagong University's hilly areas to join Boalia canal to fall into the Halda river, was vibrant around 30 years back, with local farmers largely dependent on it for irrigation.

Rampant encroachment, including by two brick kilns in Dewannagar area, alongside siltation, left it shrunk and gradually dying between 1995 and 2010.

After the excavation, the canal briefly returned to its former glory around 2020, before siltation began filling it up once again, said farmers.

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Due to siltation and encroachment, the canal has turned into a drain in many places, while agricultural lands on its banks lie barren due to a lack of water for irrigation.

PHOTO: STAR

Resist all evil forces: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

The country's young generation should come forward to resist all evil forces, said Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

He made the call while inaugurating a cycle rally, marking the 75th founding anniversary of the AL.

The AL second-in-command also kicked off the "Cycling for Health" campaign during this time. Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam organised the campaign at Manik Mia Avenue in the capital.

Speaking on the occasion, Quader said India is a tested friend of Bangladesh.

He also called upon the youth to join AL, saying AL led the country's independence struggle.

"We will honor our commitment to creating job opportunities for the youth. The Awami League is dedicated to guiding the nation's youth towards a brighter future," he said.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 29

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-17
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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