

KUSHIYARA RIVER

Unrepaired dam leaves locals in peril

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Every monsoon, as the Kushiara River swells, the people of several villages across Moulvibazar Sadar upazila brace for the inevitable – floodwaters creeping into their homes, submerging roads, and washing away their livelihoods.

At the heart of this crisis lies the Kushiara River Protection Dam, a structure built in 1970 but now standing in a vulnerable state, breached repeatedly for over the past two decades.

For years, the LGED and the local union parishad have attempted partial fixes, yet these have done little to resolve the issue.

Eventually, homes, roads, markets, schools, other establishments, and vast croplands get submerged.

Despite patchwork repairs and desperate pleas from residents, a lasting solution remains out of reach.

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Locals, who have suffered losses, demand that the authorities take immediate steps to renovate the dam completely.

"During every monsoon, the dam gets breached several times, followed by flooding across different areas. Crops get washed away repeatedly, causing significant losses

to farmers, while residents also go through a lot of sufferings," said Swadhin Mia from Hamarkona village. "This situation has been persisting for the past 21 years. Despite repeated visits by local leaders and officials, nothing has changed yet," he added.

Since the dam is not listed with the Water Development Board, no formal project has ever been initiated by WDB to repair it. While parts of the dam were later paved with LGED's funding and brick-soling by the local union parishad, the damaged sections remain unaddressed.

"Residents of Hamarkona, Brahmangram, Notunbasti, Muslimnagar, and parts of Sherpur Bazar villages bear the brunt of the flooding. Every year, hundreds of families become displaced and forced to seek shelter elsewhere after losing their homes to the flooding," said Humayun Mia from Hamarkona village.

Mudrat Ahmed Mohan of the same village shared, "Last year, the dam broke at three places, inundating the entire area. No government project was undertaken to repair it. Later, local Hamarkona Boys Club and Muslimnagar Oikya Parishad, with

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Breaking fast, building bonds

Century-old mosque welcomes people of all faiths for iftar

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

At first glance, one might mistake it for a grand event – rows of plates, glasses, water jugs, and an array of mouth-watering iftar items neatly arranged.

Some sit alone, others in groups, preparing their meals. This is the scene every Ramadan at the historic Anderkillah Shahi Jame Mosque in Chattogram.

For the past 25 years, this iftar gathering has brought together thousands of Muslim devotees. However, it is not limited to the Muslim community; people of all religions, races, and backgrounds are welcomed without discrimination.

Here, neither wealth nor profession matters – only



the spirit of brotherhood and harmony.

The Anderkillah Shahi Jame Mosque, a witness to Chattogram's Mughal past, was built by Shaista Khan in 1667 on the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb to commemorate the Mughal conquest of the region.

According to sources, Maulana Saeed Muhammad Anwar Hossain Taher Jaberi Al Madani, the mosque's Khatib since 1996, initiated the iftar gathering in 2001. Initially a small affair, it took its current grand form in 2008, pausing only during the pandemic in 2020.

Mohammad Hasan Murad, personal assistant to the Khatib, said, "Since the first

day of Ramadan, we have been organising iftar for thousands of devotees. The number grows as the month progresses, and in the last 10 days, we serve nearly 5,000 people under the Khatib's supervision."

Asked how such a large gathering is managed, he said, "Many people donate food for the God's blessings. We store these donations in two storerooms and prepare our iftar from them."

"It's open to everyone. People from all religions participate, fostering unity and harmony," he added.

Chef Abul Hossen, who leads the cooking team, said, "A team of 12 cooks and 30 assistants prepare nine items for iftar every day, working from the morning."

Fazlul Karim Manik, a businessman from New Market, said, "I come here every year. Poor and destitute people, alongside distinguished guests, all break their fast together, seeking blessings from the Almighty."

HEATHROW POWER OUTAGE

Biman flight forced to return to Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight to London was forced to turn back yesterday after a power outage disrupted operations at Heathrow Airport.

According to a Biman statement, Flight BG 201 departed Dhaka at 8:42am, made a brief stop in Sylhet Osmani International Airport at 9:06am, and resumed its journey at 10:46am.

However, an unexpected power failure at Heathrow, which caused significant delays and operational difficulties, forced the Boeing 787-9 to turn back before reaching London.

The flight landed in Dhaka at 1:15pm with 267 passengers, including the pilot and crew, onboard.

According to the BBC, Heathrow was to be closed all day yesterday due to a fire at a nearby electrical substation, which supplies its power. The airport, Europe's busiest, warned of "significant disruption" over the coming days and advised passengers not to travel until further notice.

At least 1,351 flights faced possible cancellations, according to Flightradar24.

Biman, which operates four weekly flights to London, said upcoming flights may also be affected.

2 killed, 21 injured in Bogura road crash

UNB, Bogura

Two people were killed and 21 others injured when a truck hit a pedestrian before crashing into a human haulier on the Sherpur Dhunat road in Bogura's Sherpur upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Harun-or Rashid, 52, and Hanif, 35.

Hanif and the injured were day labourers travelling to Kusumbi village in Sherpur upazila to harvest potatoes from Dhunat upazila.

Sub-Inspector Tofazzal Hossain of Sherpur Police Station said the truck first knocked down pedestrian Harun. About 200 yards later, it rammed into the human haulier near Ranabirbala Bashir Pagla Shrine, overturning the vehicle carrying the labourers. The accident killed Harun and Hanif on the spot and left the others injured, he added.

The human haulier was carrying 17 women and five men.

Bakhtiar Uddin, warehouse in-charge of Sherpur Fire Service, said the injured were taken to the Upazila Health Complex. SI Tofazzal said police seized the truck, but the driver managed to flee.

EID TRAVEL THRU JAMUNA BRIDGE

Authorities gear up to prevent hassles

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

As Eid-ul-Fitr approaches, the authorities concerned have taken measures to ensure a seamless Eid journey for holidaymakers travelling to the northern districts via the Jamuna Bridge on the Dhaka-Tangail highway.

According to sources at the Highway Police and Traffic Police departments, approximately 18,000 to 20,000 vehicles travel daily through the Jamuna Bridge on around 116 routes to 23 districts, including 16 in the north. During Eid, this number doubles.

To manage the heavy traffic flow during the Eid holidays, the 13-kilometre east link road of the Jamuna Bridge from Elenaga has been upgraded to four lanes this year.

Additionally, if necessary, Dhaka-bound vehicles can take an alternative route through the Govindasibhuanpur Road after crossing the bridge, said Shinthia Azmeri Khan, executive engineer of the Roads and Highways Department in Tangail.

Meanwhile, the bridge authority is prepared to handle the increased traffic on the Jamuna Bridge during Eid. Additional toll booths will be set up, and more employees will be deployed to facilitate smooth vehicle crossings.

A couple of wreckers will also be on standby to remove any broken-down vehicles on the bridge, said Ahsanul Kabir Pavel, executive engineer of the Bangladesh Bridge Authority in

Tangail.

While a large number of vehicles can now reach the end of the bridge more efficiently using the four-lane east link road, Jamal Hossain, a bus driver on the Dhaka-Rajshahi route, expressed concerns about potential congestion at the east end of the bridge.

He noted that vehicles might still face bottlenecks after paying tolls.

The situation could worsen if an accident occurs or if vehicles break down on the bridge, he added.

Sajedur Rahman, in-charge of the Elenaga Highway Police Outpost, said that if vehicles can quickly

reach the end of the bridge using the four-lane link road, tailbacks may be avoided, making the journey more convenient this time.

Delwar Hossain, traffic inspector in Tangail, mentioned that a traffic police unit will be deployed on the highway during Eid, especially at night, as in previous years.

"We hope that head-on collisions on the east link road will be avoided due to the four-lane upgrade. Previously, it took a long time to clear accident wreckage from the road, leading to severe tailbacks," he added.

Md Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of police in Tangail, said that 750 police personnel will be on duty along the highway, providing full support to ensure a smooth and hassle-free Eid journey while maintaining law and order.

"It will be a coordinated effort to overcome the existing challenges," he added.



2 shot as JCD, Jubo Dal men clash in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two people sustained bullet injuries during a clash between Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal members over hanging an Eid banner in Chattogram city's GEC area last night.

Additionally, one person was stabbed, and another was beaten during the clash.

Police said the clash erupted between supporters of Shah Alam, joint convener of Chattogram City unit BNP, and supporters of Barrister Mir Helal, BNP's central assistant organising secretary, in the Debar Par area of Kushum Bag.

The injured are Jihadur Rahman Jiad, Kamal Hossen, Anwar Hossen Mona, and Ramiz. According to police, Jiad and Kamal, both members of Jubo Dal, belong to Shah Alam's group.

Of the four, Jiad sustained two bullet wounds and is currently receiving treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Mojibur Rahman Kawsar, officer-in-charge of Khulshi Police Station, said, "A brawl broke out between Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal members over hanging an Eid banner in the GEC area around 9:00pm. Following the altercation, both groups engaged in a violent clash in the Debar Par area."

"On information, police went to the spot and brought the situation under control," he added.

Mir Helal and Shah Alam could not be reached for comments.

Rapist gets life term in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A Jashore court on Thursday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for raping a schoolgirl in Abhaynagar upazila of Jashore in 2020.

Judge Golam Kabir of Jashore's Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-1 passed the order, said Public Prosecutor Abdul Latif.

The court also fined Tk 50,000 to the convict, Shamim Hasan, a resident of Bashuari village in the upazila.

He will have to serve three more months in prison if he fails to pay the fine, Abdul Latif said.

The rape incident took place on August 18, 2020, and the victim filed the case the same day.

After investigating the case, law enforcers submitted a charge sheet to the court against Shamim Hasan.

3 cops withdrawn after assault on journo in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three policemen have been withdrawn from duty following an assault on journalist MA Salam Biswas in Badarganj upazila of Rangpur.

A probe committee has been formed to investigate the incident.

The officers – ASI Robiul Alam, and constables Al-Amin Hossain and Mojibur Rahman of Badarganj Police Station – were closed yesterday, said Rangpur Range DIG Aminul Islam.

Salam Biswas, Badarganj correspondent of the national daily Amar Desh, sustained injuries to his hand and leg and was hospitalised.

The incident occurred on March 19, about 100 yards from Badarganj Police Station.

Salam was recording a dispute among police officers near a pickup when Constable Al-Amin ordered him to stop. Upon refusal, officers allegedly assaulted him, dragged him inside the station, and beat him again.

A video shows Al-Amin threatening to beat Salam if he didn't stop recording. Later, local journalists rescued Salam. Journalists across Rangpur demanded justice for the victim.

DIG Aminul Islam assured appropriate action.



Fishermen prepare their nets to catch fish from the Sugandhya River in Babuganj, Barishal. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

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we have handed over **7 PROJECTS**

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5 months ahead

BLUE SKY HOMES | Bashundhara R/A
3 months ahead

PINE HURST | Uttara
2 months ahead

ON TIME

WINSOME HOME
Bashundhara R/A

BREEZY HOMES
Bashundhara R/A

SILVER WOOD
Aftabnagar

LIBERTY
Khilgaon