

## GOHALA RIVER

# Farmers struggle to transport crops without bridge

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Hundreds of people from 30 villages under Ullapara and Shahzadpur upazilas of Sirajganj and Faridpur upazila of Pabna have long been suffering due to absence of a bridge over Gohala river.

Farmers are the worst sufferers.

They said they face a lot of hurdles to transport their crops to local markets after harvest.

"As a sharecropper, I get 55 percent of the harvest and sell it in market. Of the money generated, around half is spent for transportation cost due to absence of a bridge on the river," said farmer Abdul Mazid of Nada village under Ullapara upazila.

"The cost of crop production is already high as we have to pay a considerable amount to water pump operators for irrigation. After that, hardly much is left to sustain for the rest of the year," he said.

The situation is same for hundreds of farmers from Nada, Bri Angura, Potazia, Raoutara, Bil Chandak, Kenai, Chithulia, Borabil, Boyrapara, Dutta Pungoli, and

Pach Pungoli villages in Chalan Beel area under the three upazilas.

Md Abdul Alim of Pungoli village said he cultivates mustard and paddy in the vast low laying land in Chalan Beel but faces difficulty to carry the crops to his houses due to lack of a bridge.

"Gohala river remains dry for months until monsoon comes. During this time, we have to bear high cost of transporting our harvest since there is no easy route from the croplands to our homes. A bridge on the river would have mitigated our sufferings significantly," he said.

According to the district agriculture offices, there are more than 17,000 acres of agricultural land in the three upazilas surrounding Gohala river, used for cultivating paddy, mustard, vegetables and other seasonal crops.

Contacted, Ullapara upazila engineer Md Shahidullah said there has been no plan to construct a bridge in the area. "As the matter of the farmers' sufferings came to light, we have begun working on a plan in this regard," he added.



## Rare slow lorises rescued in Sreemangal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A rare slow loris was rescued from a dog attack in Sreemangal, Moulvibazar yesterday.

The animal was initially handed over to Swapan Dev Sajal, director of the Bangladesh Wildlife Service Foundation.

A pedestrian named Junu Mia rescued the primate from the Gar Para area of Shankarsena village in Nimai Shiv Bari.

Swapan Dev said, "This rare slow loris was walking slowly when it entered the village. At that time, a dog suddenly attacked it, and it got scared. Passerby Junu Mia came forward and rescued it after hearing the dog's barking."

He added that the slow loris was later handed over to the authorities concerned.

Md Kazi Nazmul Haque, Sreemangal range officer of the Wildlife Conservation Department, said the animal is currently being kept at the Lawachara Rescue Centre.

It is unwell and will be released into the Lawachara forest once it has recovered.

## Mother, son killed in road crash

BSS, Sylhet

Another and her three-year-old son were killed, while two others injured, in a road accident in the Kumira area in Satkhira's Patkelghata upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Rita Sadhu, 28, wife of Apurba Sadhu, 34, and their four-year-old daughter Shova Sadhu sustained injuries and are currently undergoing treatment. The accident occurred at the Kumira Kadamtala intersection on the Satkhira Khulna highway around 12:30pm.

According to locals, the family was travelling to Rita's father's house in the Sagardari area under Keshabpur upazila on a motorcycle. While passing through the Kumira Kadamtala intersection, a Satkhira-bound passenger bus coming from the opposite direction hit the motorbike, leaving Rita and Sourav dead on the spot.

Police Inspector (Investigation) of Patkelghata Police Station Sanjay Kumar Das confirmed the matter. "The bodies have been sent to the Sadar Hospital morgue," he said.

ANWARUL HAIDER, Noakhali

Residents of Noakhali municipality have long been suffering due to the town's poor sewage system.

A grim scenario persists across the 150-year-old municipality. The sewage drains have not been maintained and cleaned since those were constructed. There is no valve or cover on the drains. The sewage water from houses, hospitals, and other establishments seeps in and accumulates in the open drains, creating a breeding ground for mosquitoes while polluting the environment with bad odour.

Most of the drains are occupied by shops. Even a slight drizzle causes waterlogging, causing sewage waste to scatter throughout the city.

Residents complained that the municipality has been delivering a poor service with sewage disposal. The sewage



system has become extremely fragile due to a lack of maintenance and cleaning up of drains for years.

The municipality, established in 1876, has an area of 17.2 square kilometres, and 13,2185 residents in 17,761 holdings under its nine wards. It has a 63km drainage network, including around 17km of natural and man-made canals and around 46km of sewers.

Visiting different residential areas in the city, including Hajiing, New Housing (Sand Field), Hospital Road, and the Main Road, this correspondent observed that the drains and canals have been illegally occupied by land grabbers and squatters for years under political umbrella.

Shops, businesses, and establishments have been mushrooming across the entire



drainage network, with no measures taken by the authorities concerned to evict the occupiers.

"The city has an unplanned sewage system. The drains never get cleaned and thus have blockages, causing waterlogging every time it rains even a little bit. The drains are uncovered, causing unbearable stench, much to the inconvenience of residents and businesses. We demand the authorities clean and cover up the drains before the monsoon comes," said Monirul Islam Mukul, a local businessman and social worker.

The drain stretching from Baksi Mijir Poll to Gabua Canal, and the canal flowing between the Municipal Market to the east side of Dutt Hat have not been cleaned and maintained for years, while being encroached on at various points, severely disrupting the town's sewage system," said Fazlul Haque Badal, a local resident.

Mofizur Rahman from New Housing area demanded that authorities urgently renovate and clean the clogged drains and cover those with lids.

Jamal Hossain Bishad, a journalist and civil rights activist, urged the municipality authorities and other government departments concerned to take coordinated

initiatives to improve the city's sewage disposal and drainage maintenance system.

Betal Ahmed, executive engineer of Noakhali Municipality, acknowledged the issue.

"We have identified 13 points across different canals and drains to connect them in a bid to mitigate waterlogging. Drains have become clogged as residents throw garbage and litter everywhere, causing waterlogging after rains," he said.

"Initiatives have been taken to clean the drains and ensure better drainage before the upcoming monsoon. The work is being delayed a bit due to worker shortage and fund constraints," he added.

Ala Uddin, executive officer of Noakhali municipality, said they have taken an initiative to clean and dredge the 3km Chagalmara canal to improve sewage disposal.

Khandaker Iftiak Ahmed, deputy commissioner of Noakhali, said the municipality authorities have been instructed to clean the canals and drains.

Jalal Uddin, administrator of the municipality and also deputy director of the Local Government Engineering Department in Noakhali, said work will begin soon to clean the drains and canals ahead of the monsoon.



Sundari canal has become a victim of mindless pollution and encroachment. Waste dumping in the canal by people and nearby markets has blocked its natural flow, plaguing the canal's surroundings with a putrid smell. The photo was taken Karatia Market area recently.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL



People from all walks of life joined a vibrant procession celebrating "Khulna Day," organised by the Khulna Development Movement Coordination Committee to mark the 143rd anniversary of the district yesterday. The colourful procession paraded through various city streets before concluding at Shibbari intersection. Khulna was officially declared a district on April 25, 1882. Since then, the day has been commemorated annually with diverse programmes. The photo was taken from Shibbari.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## 1.5kg liquid gold seized at airport

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Customs officials seized approximately 1.5 kilogrammes of liquid gold yesterday at Sylhet Osmani International Airport from a passenger arriving from Dubai.

The incident occurred shortly after the arrival of Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight BG-248 around 10:30am.

The passenger, Alim Uddin from Gohora village in Sylhet, was detained by customs officials.

Injamam Ul Haque, assistant commissioner of Customs at the airport, said, "Based on a tip-off, customs officials identified Alim as a suspect and conducted a thorough search."

The officials discovered several paste-like substances in his trousers and undergarments, and a subsequent body scan confirmed the presence of smuggled liquid gold, he added.

He also said legal proceedings are currently underway as per customs regulations.

## SYLHET MEDICAL UNIV Arrest warrants against 58 over recruitment scam

UNB, Sylhet

A Sylhet court has issued arrest warrants against 58 people, including the former vice-chancellor and acting registrar of Sylhet Medical University, in a case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission over allegations of irregularities and abuse of power in staff recruitment.

Judge of Sylhet Metropolitan Senior Special Court Rokonuzzaman passed the order after accepting the charge sheet against the accused on Thursday afternoon, said court official Kripasindhu Das.

The ACC submitted the charge sheet on April 20, accusing former VC Dr Morshed Ahmed Chowdhury and Acting Registrar Md Noimul Haque Chowdhury of illegally appointing and promoting individuals without adhering to required qualifications, age limits, or institutional approval.

According to the charge sheet, between 2019 and 2023, the university recruited 220 staff on

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## LALMONIRHAT-BURIMARI Blockade disrupts train service for 5 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Train service on the Lalmonirhat-Burimari rail route remained suspended for five days due to a blockade on the rail line enforced by locals.

They had been observing a railway blockade at Patgram Railway Station since Monday, and were still continuing during the filing of this report yesterday, demanding direct service of the Burimari Express from Burimari Railway Station to Dhaka.

Meher Ali, a passenger speaking at Burimari Railway Station, said there are 13 stations on the 84-kilometre Lalmonirhat-Burimari rail route and four passenger trains usually operate on it every day.

He added that passengers in the area always travel by train safely at a low cost. But since the train service has been suspended, they have been spending more money travelling on the roads.

Patgram Railway Station Master Noor Alam said locals and regular passengers

enforced the blockade, demanding that the intercity train Burimari Express run directly from Burimari to Dhaka.

According to the blockaders, the Burimari Express started its operation directly from Burimari on March 12



last year. But a day later, on March 13, it started operating from Lalmonirhat Railway Station. Since then, passengers from Burimari have been travelling to Lalmonirhat via a shuttle train to board the Burimari Express.

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