

Meghna tragedy

Passengers lose interest in launch journey



A Nabinagar bound launch coming from Brahmanbaria with lesser passengers after the recent river disaster.

From Sk Md Shahidul Islam

BRAHMANBARIA, May 17: River vessel is the only mode of communication of maximum number of people of Nabinagar upazila due to lack of proper road communication system in the area.

But most river vessels operate without registration or efficient drivers in this area. So thousands of passengers have to travel every day risking their lives.

The latest worst launch disaster occurred at Lalpur and Mirzarchar claiming 128 people. Out of the dead victims, 15 unclaimed bodies of ML Dolphin were buried at nearby Charchartola here.

According to an unofficial report, about 170 people of adjacent districts drowned in the last four years in launch disasters and boat tragedies.

Most of these vessels plying along the route are of "Motor Launch" or ML category. As per the existing rule, these types of vessels must have masters and drivers of third grade in addition to 11 other staff. But few of their masters and drivers have the required certificates, giving rise to mishap.

Nabinagar is surrounded by the mighty Meghna, the Titus and some other small rivers situated on the western part of the district. This upazila is linked with the district headquarters with a 17-kilometre long kutcha road. But due to frequent floodings and lack of initiatives for its



Passengers prefer a mechanised boat to any launch which they term as death trap while travelling from Ashuganj to elsewhere. This is a new phenomenon just after Meghna launch tragedy.

development the road remains unfit for vehicular movement. This is why, though the upazila headquarters is 17-kilometre away from the district headquarters, the people are compelled to travel through 56-kilometre area the road toward Brahmanbaria via Companygonj of Comilla district. Such travel is so expensive for the poor and lower middle class people of Nabinagar upazila that they have to resort to launches and boats for movement to Brahmanbaria at a relatively cheaper cost.

There are three launch routes from Nabinagar upazila headquarters. These are: Nabinagar to Brahmanbaria, Nabinagar to Bhairab and Nabinagar to Narsingdi.

Although a road has been developed from Nabinagar to Companygonj-Comilla, yet most people do not use the road. Usually launches are their easy mode of transport. But the plying launches are not well equipped and modern. The launches have no any life saving equipment. Violating rule they usually ply their vessels overloaded. It is a regular feature.

In most launch disasters, some washed away by the current of river to unknown destinations and some bodies remain unclaimed. Relatives of such unclaimed bodies eagerly wait for days together for their dear and near ones, but in vain. Their near ones never come back.

Engine boat owners are also doing brisk business by crossing passengers from Nabinagar to other places ignoring water traffic rules. As a result, boat mishap is also a regular feature in

the area. While contacted one launch passenger named Alim Mia, informed that the launch staffers deceive the passengers. Even upper class passengers are not spared.

The members of law enforcing agencies overlook all kinds of ill practices.

When contacted, a launch staffer said that they only carry on the order of launch owners.

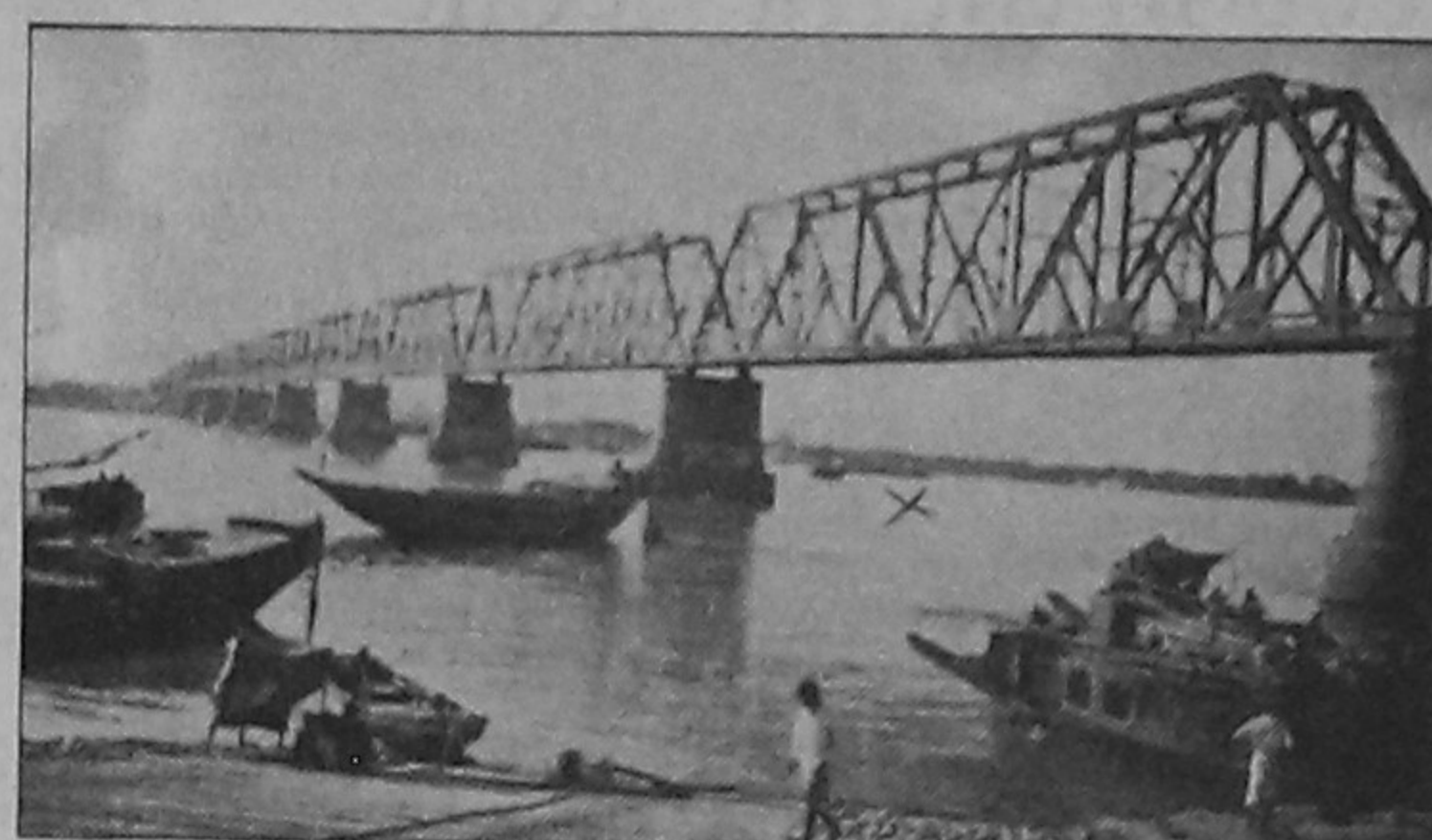
People alleged that police do not try to check the malpractices of the launches and they do not file any case against the launch owners and staffer.

While contacted, Promob Kumar Roy Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Ashuganj Bandar thana he informed there is another administrative authority for launch transportation and shipping corporation under Sea Transport Department. Police can not directly interfere, he says.

Still he has directed the police of Ashuganj and Nabinagar to take proper and every possible step to check any misdeed in launches or other water vessels.

It is alleged that there is no permanent relief barge for Ashuganj Nabinagar areas to save the victim boats and launches though Ashuganj is an important busy launch ghat. As a result, relief barge Rostom came to the spot from far away Narayanganj after the latest launch disaster.

Meanwhile, when the two launches — ML Dolphin and ML Begol Bird capsized no relief barge or crane of the proper authorities came to the spots on time. But the relief barge and work-



People demand a permanent relief barge or crane on the spot (cross marked) on the northern side of Bhairab Railway Bridge near Ashuganj ferry ghat for quick rescue operation.

ing boats of a British company, Edmund Nuttall Limited, the main contractor of Bhairab Bridge Project headed by R Rensma, Project Manager, Kees Jurg Construction Manager and Slang Supervision (lifting crane) along with 50 workers rushed to spot and recovered ML Dolphin and its victims. Later on, one relief crane 'Rostom' reached to the spot from Narayanganj the next day and recovered another one.

While contacted Kees Jurg said that on receiving information of the tragic disaster they rushed to the spot as there were no relief barges.

Though they are engaged Bhairab Bridge Project work what is going to be built on Dhaka-Sylhet highway, they took up the matter from the humanitarian point of view.

Besides the passengers of Nabinagar Bhairab route have allocated one unfit launch 'Titus' recently after the worst launch mishap.

As a result launch service remained off for seven days. Some passengers have started travelling by engine boats now.

They have realised that unfit launches are death traps.

Suffering passengers of the areas have demanded that all launches plying through this route should be well-equipped and a permanent relief barge should be posted along this river route.

They have also urged the government to take an urgent step to develop the 17-kilometre long road from Nabinagar to Brahmanbaria immediately.

Magura town now a den of narcotics traders

From Hossain Seraj

MAGURA, May 17: At least four spots in the town have turned into dens of illegal narcotics traders, giving rise to drug addicts.

Local people said drug traders are active in Nuton Bazaar, Doarpur, Stadiumpara and Chhayabani Cinema areas. Besides, drug traders are also active at Athrokhata village, adjacent to the district headquarters.

Nowadays the traders are doing brisk under the nose of law enforcing authorities, local people alleged.

Parents and guardians of young children have expressed concern over the open sale of illegal drugs.

Police personnel and Narcotics Control Department often arrest some persons on charges of illegal possession of drugs like hemp, Indian phenidyl syrup and heroin. But big shots always remain out of reach of law enforcing authorities.

Three people recently died of heroin addiction in the district. They were identified as Fushar, 20, and Lupa, 22, of Parnandul village and Mofiz, 24, of village Bhaina in Sadar upazila.

Besides, drug addicts often resort to various crimes like mugging and extortion in order to meet the expense of drug. The addicts also steal valuables from their houses to meet the cost, guardians said.

Lack of job opportunities and frustration over family troubles have been attributed to the rise in drug addiction among youth.

During his recent visit to Nuton Bazaar, this correspondent found that some heroin traders had adopted a new technique to sell the drug. They sell heroin in a matchbox. They fill an empty matchbox with small packets of heroin and sell it to

the customers. When contacted Abul Kalam Azad, circle-inspector of local Narcotics Control Department, said the office has not recovered a single gram of heroin so far this year.

According to statistics provided by him, from January to April this year the office recovered only 1.110 grams of hemp and 5 bottles of phenidyl syrup and filed 6 cases in these connections.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate measures to control the illegal trading of drugs in the district.



Deadly dose
A drug addict taking heroin which is a common scene in Magura town.

Durgapur highest fish producing area in greater Rajshahi

Fish resources in Bay come down

DURGAPUR (Rajshahi), May 17: State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Prof Abdul Qudus said Durgapur upazila has achieved reputation as the highest fish producing area in greater Rajshahi district, reports BSS.

The state minister was addressing a review meeting on development activities of the upazila in the auditorium of the Upazila Parishad recently.

Prof Qudus said development of fisheries sector is a must to ensure nutrition to the commoners and make the rural economy self-reliant.

The state minister visited Durgapur Health Complex, Bardhanpur High School and Jhaluka High School. He also inaugurated the Palashbari Non-government Primary School.

Prof Qudus later addressed a public rally at Amgachi Saharbanu High School ground. He urged the people to join in the development endeavours initiated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Chairman of Jhaluka Union Parishad Mohammad Mozahar Hossain presided over the meeting. It was addressed, among others, by General Secretary of Rajshahi Zila Awami League Advocate Tajul Islam Mohammad Farook and chairperson of Mohila Awami League Begum Akhtar Jahan.

A report from Cox's Bazar says: Fish resources in the Bay of Bengal has come down to an alarming state with acute shortage of reserve while experts fear that the situation may turn worse if government fails to take effective measures to tackle it immediately.

Indiscriminate killing of fish during the breeding season, uncontrolled harvesting of shrimp fries, random uses of drag-net and 'bihindi' nets and killing of all types of fish fries during harvesting of shrimp fries are to be blamed for reduction of fish reserve in the Bay.

The fish reserve in the Bay was 1.40,000 metric tons in the sea bed during the year 1995. Aquaculturist M N Sarker said despite a government ban on uses of 'bihindi' nets and drag-nets, the fishermen are using about 35,000 such nets as the members of the law enforcing agencies are indifferent in proper application of law.

Around 12,000 fishing boats have virtually become non-operative and remain anchored at the Cox's Bazar sea shore, the largest sea resort in the world, as the return from deep sea fishing is usually not always profitable. The costs for one such trip involves Taka 35,000 to 50,000 only for two-week fishing.

The Bay is in a state of virtual state of fishless for the last couple to months, Kabir Ahmed, President of Cox's Bazar Fishing Boat Owners' Association told recently. He said "Even last year fishermen used to come back with smiling faces. This year they are returning with empty hands." He also expressed his resentments over inaction of the concerned agencies in taking legal action against persons responsible for violation of the existing laws.

Fish exporters predict that they have to suffer losses this year and said the income of foreign exchange from exports might suffer due to 50 per cent fall in exports compared to last

year. "I have exported only 35 metric tonnes of processed fish this year which was 60 metric tonnes last year," Mohammad Shah Alam, Proprietor of one of 18 fish processing units here, said. He also pointed out that the fish processing units earned Taka 55 crore last year by exporting 1,500 metric tons of processed fish.

Meanwhile, prices of shrimp fries have gone down as the production is higher than that of demand in the local market. Mustafizur Rahman of Nirbibi Hatchery Limited, a national award recipient said a total of 500 crore shrimp fries are being produced in different hatcheries in the county while there is market for only 320 crore. "The current price of each fry remains at Taka .25 while the production cost goes to Taka .35 to .40, official sources said.

Meanwhile, the government has taken training programme

to create awareness among the fishermen. So far 450 persons have received training in this regard.

Meanwhile, UNB reports from Shariatpur: The sweet water fish in greater Faridpur district are on the verge of extinction due to various reasons including indiscriminate fishing of fries and drying up of water bodies.

Scarcity of fish is keenly felt by the people as it used to squire the meals with adequate protein and delicacy.

Besides, non-availability of fish affected the livelihood of about 2.5 lakh people engaged in fishing in five districts of the region.

A recent survey of the Fisheries Department revealed that fish production declined by 70 per cent in Faridpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj and Rajbari districts.



Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission

No 4, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Ramna, Dhaka-1000

Reference No-NSRC-1 (81)/2000

Dated: 8/5/2000

For Information of Members of Public

- X-ray is a very powerful and effective technique for diagnosis of disease. But are you aware that the risk of deadly cancer is involved with this ray (although the possibility is very little).
 - With a view to lessening the risk of misuse of X-ray machine the government has enforced Law (No 21 of 1993) and Regulations (1997) and the implementation of this has been entrusted with the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission.
 - All the hospitals/clinics conducting X-ray and X-ray installations are obliged by law to have licence issued by the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission and follow the regulations enforced by the commission.
 - Pay special attention to the following issue in order to lessen risk of yours and that of your near and dear ones:
 - Never make any X-ray at your desire and without the advice of the physician;
 - Don't stay inside the X-ray room during taking X-ray other than the X-ray conducting person and the person recommended by the physician for doing X-ray;
 - If under any special case of the person advised for X-ray another person is required to stay, then the person concerned will keep maximum possible distance from the X-ray machine during the period of conducting X-ray; and
 - If in any special case it is required to hold the patient then the regulations of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission will have to be followed (to hang one copy of regulations in the notice boards of X-ray clinic or hospital is obligatory by law).
- Your cooperation will help keep our lives safer and make free from risk.

Director

Atomic Safety and Radiation Control Division
BAEC/S Information-1(2)/94-562 Telephone: 8621386/505022/504331
DFP-11640-14/5 e-mail: nsrcc @bdcom.com
G-932 Fax: 8613051

News snaps

Road mishap injures 20

MANIKGANJ, May 17: A truck rammed into a passenger bus on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Sattura thana on Saturday morning leaving at least 20 people injured, reports UNB. Police and witnesses said a truck carrying cattle collided with a Khulna-bound bus of Hanif Enterprise at Golra in Sattura thana at about 11 am. Of the injured, Milon, 28, Razib, 30, James Robel, 40, Mofizul, 35, Urfi, 25, Shafiqul, 35, Radhanath Das, 49 and Rupayan Das 15, were given first aid.

Cyclone hits Tarail

KISHOREGANJ, May 17: A severe cyclone and hailstorm lashed Tarail upazila under Kishoreganj district last week damaging huge standing Boro and other crops of the area, reports BSS.

Many educational institutions and houses were damaged and trees uprooted in the cyclone. Besides, hundreds of people are now passing their days under the open sky. General Secretary of Tarail Upazila Association in Dhaka has urged the Ministry of Relief and the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to come to the aid of the suffering humanity of the area.



Leaders of Nature unit of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) addressing a press conference demanding electoral law reforms at Nature Eye, Cardiovascular and Diabetes Hospital recently. The conference was arranged as part of the advocacy programme in favour of FEMA suggested reforms.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
Cox's Bazar Public Works Division, Cox's Bazar

Memo No: 699 Dated: 4/5/2000

Public Works Department
Tender Invitation Notice

No 15/EM/1999-2000

Sealed tenders in Bangladesh Form No-2911 under the terms and conditions mentioned below are invited for the undermentioned work.

- Name of work: Project for constructing TV telecast centre at Ukha in Cox's Bazar. (Sub-head: Work of operating and installation and supply of machinery for 200 KVA power sub-station. Fiscal year 1999-2000. Taka 27,81,103/- Taka 55,623/-)
- Estimated cost: Taka 27,81,103/-
- Earnest money: Taka 55,623/-
- Time fixed for completion of work: 90 (ninety) days from the date of issue of tender schedule
- Cost of each set of tender schedule: Taka 775/00
- Place for selling tender: Offices of all Executive Engineers under Chittagong Public Works Zone/offices of the Executive Engineers fixed by the Public Works Zone, Dhaka/Rajshahi/Khulna including the office of the undersigned and office of the Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong and the offices of Executive Engineers E/M Division fixed by Additional Chief Engineer, Public Works E/M, Dhaka.
- Place for receiving tender: Chittagong Public Works Division 3/4, office of Executive Engineer, Bandarban Public Works Division and office of the Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong including the undersigned.
- Last date of selling tender: 24/5/2000.
- Eligibility of contractor/contractor's establishment:
 - Special class enlisted with Public Works Department, special class one (combined), class one (E/M) contractor's establishment/manufacturing establishment of electricity sub-station or local agent of manufacturing establishment which have the high standard electrical licence issued by the authorities concerned, certificate of registration of Value Added Tax and TIN certificate.
 - Establishments willing to participate in the tender should have previous experience of supplying electrical machinery for similar power sub-station, installation and successful operation in a single work order of at least the value of minimum one third of the estimated cost in government/semi-government/autonomous body.
 - The certificate of previous experience in prescribed form (procureable free of cost from the office should be given by the official of the establishment concerned (not below the rank of an Executive Engineer).
 - Application for purchasing tender will have to be addressed to the Additional Chief Engineer, Chittagong Public Works Zone, Agrabad through the undersigned at least (five) days ahead of the last date of sale of tender with the attested copies of electrical licence for high standard, certificate of registration of Value Added Tax, TIN certificate, certificate of previous experience and contractor, registration book/certificate as manufacturer/certificate as an agent of manufacturing establishment.
 - Tender will not be sold without the permission letter for purchasing tender issued by the Additional Chief Engineer, Chittagong Public Works Zone.
 - Interested tenderers must submit with tenders the attested copies of the ten-figured tax registration certificates, TIN certificate, valid ABC licence issued by Electrical Licensing Board, certificate of previous experience, contractor registration book, attested copies of two pages, in one of which the signature of the contractor has been attested by the Executive Engineer and the other page of contractor registration in which the proof of payment of renewal fee up-to-date has been mentioned /certificate as manufacturer/certificate as local agent of manufacturing establishment, trade licence up-to-date in case of agents of manufacturing establishment or manufacturing agent.
 - Tenderers must submit the letter of permission issued by the Additional Chief Engineer, Chittagong Public Works Zone and original money receipt for purchasing tender document with tender.
 - Date of receiving and opening tender: Tender will be received on 25/5/2000 at 12:00 Noon and it will be opened on the same day at 12:15 PM in presence of the tenderers (those who wish to remain present). If the office activities are disrupted in all the tender receiving places due to unavoidable circumstances, then tenders will be received the next working day as per earlier rules. No separate notice will be issued for this.
 - Date and place of: 01/6/2000 at 12:30 PM in the office of the undersigned.
 - The undersigned reserves the power to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Md Jasim Uddin

Executive Engineer

Cox's Bazar Public Works Division

Cox's Bazar

Phone: 3547

DFP-11727-15/5
G-933



Bangladesh Power Development Board

রাত ১১টা থেকে ভোর ৬টা
মধ্যে সেচ পাম্প চালান

BPDB's Local Tender Notice

1 Local sealed tenders are invited by Bangladesh Power Development Board from renowned local manufacturers/supplier for the procurement of Conductor as stated below:

Sl No	Tender enquiry no & date	Description of equipment/materials	Qty	Cost of tender document	Tender receiving date
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1	2	3	4	5	6
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1	Pur-EQ-14/2000 dated 3-5-2000.	AAC 'WASP' Insulated Conductor.	300 KM.	Tk 4000.00.	6-6-2000.
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2 A complete set of tender documents may be purchased by interested bidders on submission of written application and on payment of non-refundable fee of Taka as mentioned in column-5 each as above against this tender in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order in favour of "Director, Electrical Equipment, BPDB, Dhaka."

3 A bid bond equivalent to 2.5% of the offered price shall be submitted with tender.

4 Tender will be received up to 11:00 AM and will be opened at 11:30 AM in the prescribed date as mentioned in column-6 each as above in presence of the intending bidders or their representatives, if any. Tender shall neither be sent by post nor it will be sold on the opening day. Offer send by Post/Telex/DHL/Fax will neither be received nor it will be accepted.

5 The expenditure will be booked against the project under ADP of 1999-2000 of BPDB for procurement of materials/equipment and spares on emergency basis of Rehabilitation and Replacement of Transmission and Distribution System.

Project Director

Procurement of Materials/Equipment and Spares on Emergency Basis of Rehabilitation and Replacement of Transmission and Distribution System of

DPDB & Director

Electrical Equipment PDB, Dhaka.

Biddut/Jana-2020(5)/99-2000
DFP-11681-14/5
G-931