

# Paturia ferry service may not return to normal soon

## Three dredgers engaged, two more on way

ZAHANGIR ALAM BISWAS,  
Manikganj

Dredging of Paturia-Daulatdia and Paturia-Nagarbari (Kazirhat) channels in the Padma has started but it can not be said when ferry operation in the two channels will become normal.

BIWTA officials yesterday

claimed that normal ferry operation in Paturia terminal could be resumed in three days.

But other sources said it would not be possible as the water level of the Padma is falling fast, which would need dredging for a long time.

Three dredgers removed about 50,000 cubic meters of silt from in front of Paturia terminal since the

operation began on September 7, BIWTA sources said.

At least 11 lakh cubic meters of silt will have to be removed only from the Paturia terminal area to ensure normal ferry operation. This will need Tk 6 crore, they said.

A three-kilometer shoal has emerged in front of Paturia ferry terminal, allegedly because of

unplanned dredging earlier, other sources said.

Ferry vessels ply the routes with risk as their propellers at times touch sand under water, operators said.

Sources in BIWTA (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority) said two more dredgers will be engaged soon to make the channels navigable again.

This correspondent during a visit to the area on Monday saw silt removed from the channel were being dumped at a short distance. Long snarl-up of vehicles were seen at Paturia and Daulatdia terminals as two out of three ghats in Paturia could not be operated. Ferry vessels could not approach and anchor at the two terminals due to deposit of silt.

Vessel operators said this is no solution as the silt will roll back into the channel soon.

Over Tk 100 crore were spent for dredging in the area in last 13 years but it was of little use because of corruption in survey, unplanned dredging and irregularities by a section of officials, they alleged.

Paturia-Daulatdia and Paturia-Nagarbari (Kazirhat) routes are vital because they link the capital with south and south-western districts of the country.



PHOTO: STAR

A dredger in operation in the Paturia-Daulatdia channel in the Padma.

## Employees lock Dinajpur Medical College Hospital for salary

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Angry staff of Dinajpur Medical College Hospital (DMCH) have locked the hospital since Sunday protesting non-payment of their salaries for the last 23 months.

They also locked the college administrative building.

As many as 41 staff of the hospital are demonstrating for the last three days for payment of their salaries and absorbing their jobs under government revenue head. Procession and meeting were also held on the college campus.

According to hospital sources, the staffers were appointed under a project of Dinajpur Medical College two years ago. They are yet to be absorbed under revenue head.

Students alleged that their studies are being hampered greatly due to the agitation.

A leader of the agitating staffers told this correspondent on condition of anonymity that their movement would continue until realisation of their demands.

When contacted, the DMCH principal admitted the fact and told this correspondent that he had informed the ministry concerned regarding the demands of the staff.

## NILPHAMARI POSTAL SCAM

# Move to vacate HC stay order on cases

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Postal authorities are preparing to take legal course to vacate the High Court stay order on proceedings of the two cases filed earlier in connection with the postal scam in Nilphamari Head Post Office.

The High Court in an order in the second week of last month stayed the proceedings of the two cases filed by Nilphamari Head Post Office Post Master Torab Ali after a probe body detected defalcation of huge amounts of money from depositors' accounts.

"We are consulting the solicitor wing of the High Court to vacate the stay order", Reazul Islam, DPMG of Dinajpur Postal Region, told this correspondent on Sunday. Reazul Islam is also in-charge of Rangpur Postal Region.

Prayer would also be made for cancellation of the bail granted to the accused by the High Court, he said.

Two probe bodies from Dhaka detected misappropriation of Tk 4.30 crore from savings accounts and savings certificates at Nilphamari Head Post Office. The probe started on April 4 and continued till the last week of June this year.

The Post Master of the

Nilphamari Head Post Office filed two cases on April 6 and April 13 accusing Assistant Post Master Mir Nural Islam Munna, Ledger Operator Ahmedul Islam Raju and postal operators Taslim Uddin and Liaquat Ali.

He also filed a supplementary case in the third week of June accusing three more employees. They are Abdus Salek, Assistant Post Master of Rangpur Head Post Office; Golam Nabi Sarkar, Assistant Post Master of Gaibandha Head Post Office and Azaharul Islam, Master of Kishoreganj Upazila post office. All of them worked in Nilphamari Head Post Office as postal operator in the past.

Mir Nural Islam Munna, Ahmedul Islam Raju, Taslim Uddin and Liaquat Ali were arrested and remanded.

All the accused prayed to a Magistrate Court and then to the Judge Court in Nilphamari for bail, but were rejected.

Later the three main accused—Mir Nural Islam Munna, Ahmedul Islam Raju, Taslim Uddin—moved High Court and get bail in the second week of August.

A high official of postal department told this correspondent that from the beginning of the probe since filing the case, they had

requested the Public Prosecutor (PP) in Nilphamari to seek a court order to freeze the accused persons' bank accounts and to stop payment from their those.

"We wanted court order to stop handover of moveable and immovable properties of the accused. But the Nilphamari PP did not cooperate", the official said.

Reazul Islam wrote a letter to the PP in this regard. The PP in reply suggested him to apply to the special judge of anti-corruption court in Rangpur.

Talking to this correspondent, the postal official expressed his surprise. "We got a court order in Gaibandha to freeze accounts of accused persons and to stop handover of properties. If it is possible in Gaibandha why not in Nilphamari", an official said while talking to this correspondent.

They said the DPGM In-charge also wrote a letter earlier (before the HC stay order) to Nilphamari Deputy Commissioner alleging that the postal department was not getting cooperation from the PP in connection with the scam.

When asked, the DC on Sunday admitted receipt of the letter but said he has nothing to do as the High Court stayed the proceedings of the cases. Meanwhile commercial banks here have not yet responded to an order by higher postal authorities in Dhaka to give statements of accounts of the accused persons and to stop payments from those.

Only Pubali Bank replied to the order, saying it would neither provide any information on its clients' accounts nor stop payments from their accounts without court order.

Sources here claimed that the accused persons have big amounts with banks.

The probe body also detected saving certificates worth more than Tk 1.5 crore in names of wives and wards of some accused.

BLAST AT GOPALGANJ CHURCH

## Accused Amirul remanded

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Amirul Islam, an alleged leader of outlawed Islamist militant organisation Harkatul Jihad-al-Islam, was placed on a two-day remand by a court here on Sunday.

He was arrested on charge of involvement in the bomb blast at Baniarchar Catholic Church in Gopalganj. He is also a suspect in the Kotalipara bomb planting case.

A powerful bomb was recovered ahead of a public meeting of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Kotalipara during Awami League rule.

Amirul Islam was arrested from Sreepur in Gazipur district on June 5 and brought to Gopalganj on September 6. Investigation officer of the Baniarchar bomb blast case had prayed for three days' remand of Amirul Islam. Magistrate Md. Moshir Rahman granted two days' remand.

Talking to this correspondent on the court compound, Amirul Islam said is not a Maolana and he never knew Mufti Abdul Hannan Munshi.



Four suspected militants, arrested in Barisal in connection with the August 17 serial bomb explosions across the country, were taken on remand on Monday for the second time.

## Bombs spoil life of 2 schoolboys

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Eleven year-old school student Khokon may lose his left eye and his playmate Tutul may have a crippled left hand for life.

The two are now fighting for life at Kushtia General Hospital with critical injuries from bomb explosions yesterday.

Doctors operated upon Khokon's left eye at noon.

"We will go for a second operation at night (Tuesday) in our desperate effort to save his (left) eye", Dr. Akul Uddin, Resident Medical Officer (RMO) at the hospital told this correspondent yesterday evening.

"But we are not so much hopeful about the eye", he said.

The left hand of nine year-old has

been badly burnt from elbow to the fingertip, he said.

Khokon and Tutul were going to school at Belghoria village in Kumarkhali upazila in the district at about 9 am.

On way, they saw a polythene bag on the roadside. The innocent tiny-tots picked it up out of curiosity.

Two bombs wrapped in the bag exploded causing burn injuries on most parts of their bodies.

Khokon is the son of Sattar Pramanik and Tutul is the son of Ayat Ali. People nearby took the two to hospital. Police rushed to the spot and recovered bomb splinters. They suspect the bombs were locally made.

## DEATH OF JUBO LEAGUE LEADER Torture in custody alleged: Case filed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A case was filed against seven policemen including three police officers with a Meherpur court yesterday for allegedly torturing a Jubo League leader to death.

The victim is Mokaddes Hossain, general secretary of Tetulbaria union unit of Jubo League.

The victim's brother, Tozammel Hossain, filed a case with a Magistrate court. He alleged that a police team from Bamundi outpost in Gangni upazila in Meherpur lead by Camp In-charge Sub-Inspector (SI) Abu Taher nabbed Mokaddes when he was returning home at Karamdi village in the evening after partici-

pating in AL's August 15 mourning programme held at the upazila headquarters.

Police took Mokaddes to the police camp and allegedly tortured him. As he fell sick, police admitted him to the upazila health complex.

Latter he was sifted to Meherpur General Hospital and then to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he died on August 24.

Tozammel told newsmen yesterday that he delayed in filing the case due to intimidation by the policemen.

Local unit of Awami League has also demanded investigation into the incident.

The Magistrate court ordered investigation.

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12X4