

Fertiliser-laden vessels stuck in Jamuna for 'overloading'

A dozen being unloaded with the help of lighters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Lighter vessels are being used to unload fertiliser from around 15 stranded fertiliser-laden vessels at Char Shafulla in Bera upazila under the district as movement of vessels in the Jamuna is disturbed due to navigability problem.

A few other stranded vessels, unloaded with the help of lighters during the last few days, have been able to move away, sources said.

BIWTA officials, however, attributed the problem to overloading of vessels.

Navigability problem is no longer 'so serious' as water level in the Jamuna is on rise now, they said.

There is nearly eight feet draft water everywhere on Paturia-Baghabari route in the Jamuna but most of the vessels are carrying over nine feet draft loads and the overloaded vessels often get

stuck, they said.

"The vessels are officially allowed to carry 6.5 to 7 feet draft loads in this time on Paturia-Baghabari route while vessels loaded with eight feet draft can easily move there. But most of the vessels are carrying 9.5 to 10 feet draft loads, making them unable to ply smoothly on this river route," BIWTA Deputy General Manager (DGM) Md Joynal Abedin said over phone yesterday.

Around 12/15 vessels including MV Zoo Garden, MV Modinar Path, MV Shahnewaz, MV Al Rumi, MV Queen and Moon, MV Hira-Parbat, MV Shahin are using lighter vessels to unload their goods at Char Shafulla to carry it to Baghabari port, sources said.

Unloading with lighters adds to the transport cost, they said.

The vessels owners often carry additional loads to get more profit,

Baghabari port officer Md Abdur Razzak said over phone.

Asked about the navigability problem, he said, "We have surveyed different areas of the river and requested BIWTA to conduct dredging to make the river route smooth. They had conducted dredging work in last month but the work has remained stopped this month."

BIWTA officials claimed that they conduct dredging work without any delay if there is any need.

"The BIWTA has set up dredging machine in the Jamuna River to keep navigation smooth on Paturia-Baghabari route. If the river water level comes below eight feet we rush to dredge that spot to keep the navigability smooth. As there is 8 to 8.5 feet draft at every point of the river, there is no need to dredge now," said BIWTA DGM Md Joynul Abedin.

Beaten up by 'mistake'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Three people, mistakenly identified as criminals, were caught and beaten up by Rab men at Kachubari on Thakurgaon-Panchagarh road under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila yesterday.

The victims are Manik, 25, son of Abdul Majid, and Babiruddin, 45, son of late Samiruddin of Kachubari village under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, and anwar Hossain, 29, son of late Nawab Ali of Gunagori village under Banskhal upazila of Chittagong. All the three are involved in timber trade.

Locals said Rab members intercepted them at Kachubari on Thakurgaon-Panchagarh road when they were coming from Bhullihat under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila on a motorbike at about 2:30pm.

They said the Rab men arrested the three, beat them up and later released them. The three are now undergoing treatment at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

When contacted, Major Nawshad, leader of the Rab team, said they caught the three on wrong information provided by their informer.

Two get life in Ctg for carrying phensidyl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chittagong*

A court here yesterday sentenced two people to life term imprisonment for carrying phensidyl.

District and Sessions Judge Md Abdul Kuddus Mia jailed Jamilur Rahman Babul, a truck driver, and his helper Mozammel Hossain for life for carrying 730 bottles of phensidyl in a truck.

The court also fined each Tk 10 thousand, in default, to suffer another year in jail.

Public Prosecutor Advocate Abul Hashem said police seized a truck with phensidyl and arrested the two from in front of a petrol pump at Sikalbaha under Patiya upazila on March 17 in 2008.

The charge sheet of the case was submitted on April 20 in 2008 while the charge was framed on June 26 in the same year.

Meanwhile, members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), in a drive on Monday evening, arrested a woman drug peddler along with a shutter-gun and eight bombs at Khasrurabagh adjacent to Savar bus stand.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-4 raided drug trader Munna's house and arrested Jull Begum along with a shutter-gun and eight bombs.

Woman held with arms in Gopalganj

A CORRESPONDENT, *Gopalganj*

Police yesterday noon arrested two women from a restaurant at Gopalganj town and recovered one pistol and three bullets from them.

Police sub-inspector Hashemuzzaman arrested Shahana Begum, 35, and Aduri Begum, 20, from Shampa Snacks. The two are sisters-in-law and are from Banogram in Maksudpur upazila.

Police said the two women were arrested on a tip-off that they were carrying arms.

However, Shahana alleged in presence of journalists at Sadar police station that she was not in good terms with her husband businessman Hasan Sarder of Bheranar Hasat Gopalganj town.

Shahana said her husband tactfully took away her property and threatened to hand her over to police. She alleged that Hasan took her to Shampa Snacks on the plea of meeting their only daughter there. He then tactfully got her arrested by police along with the arms, she alleged.

She said the vanity bag from which police recovered the arms did not belong to her.

But sub-inspector Hashemuzzaman said arms and bullets were recovered from Shahana Begum's vanity bag.

However, Gopalganj additional police superintendent Rakanuzzaman said he will look into the allegations made by Shahana.



As many as 162 leaders and activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, arrested in connection with the recent attacks on the opponents at Rajshahi University, were produced before Rajshahi Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

RU teacher Mamun freed on bail, arrested again

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Rajshahi University (RU) teacher Abdullah Al Mamun, arrested along with nine Jamaat-Shibir men in Natore town on February 22, was granted bail yesterday but shown arrested in an arms case.

Meanwhile, an employee of Rajshahi University was arrested for his alleged involvement in February 9 campus violence yesterday.

Police arrested Abdullah Al Mamun, a teacher of RU Islamic studies department, and nine Jamaat-Shibir leaders and workers while they were holding a secret meeting at Far East Islami Insurance Company's office at Sahara Plaza in Natore town on

February 22. They (police) also recovered four knives from the arrestees, according to a correspondent.

Mamun was arrested under Section 54 of CrPC while the Jamaat-Shibir men were arrested under Arms Act.

After hearing, Natore Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court granted bail to Mamun yesterday morning. But he was shown arrested in an arms case at Natore jail gate in the afternoon and again sent to the jail.

Assistant Police Officer of Natore Circle Apel Mahmud said cases were filed against the arrested Jamaat-shibir leaders and workers under Arms Act. As police found Mamun's involvement in the same crime, he was shown

arrested under Arms Act, the ASP added.

According to a RU correspondent, Motihar police yesterday arrested an employee of Rajshahi University (RU) for his alleged involvement in February 9 campus violence.

The arrestee, Nasir Hossain, is a fourth class employee of Pharmacy department. He was arrested on the premises of second science building.

Tofazzal Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Motihar Police Station said they arrested Nasir on charge of his involvement in February 9 violence on the RU campus. The arrested Jamaat-Shibir men disclosed his name during interrogation, the OC said.

Fatwa report brushed aside

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangpur*

Rangpur Superintendent of Police Saleh Mohammad Tanvir yesterday said no one in Rangpur police tried to implement any 'fatwa' (edict) to compel women to wear veil.

Rangpur police did not even impose any restriction on men and women's walking together at parks or other places, he said at a press briefing at his conference room.

The SP's briefing was arranged against the backdrop of media reports on Tuesday and Wednesday on alleged 'fatwa' by police about women's wearing veils.

On Tuesday, a few national dailies ran reports that Detective Branch (DB) of police in Rangpur instructed women to wear veil and DB police led by Sub-inspector (SI) Golam Minhaj picked up 19 men and women from Rangpur Zoo and Surovi Udyan on charge of anti-social activities on Monday.

Three lawyers of the High Court on Tuesday filed a writ petition and an HC bench issued a rule prohibiting any fatwa to compel any

woman to wear veil.

The HC also issued notice against the home secretary, inspector general of police, and deputy commissioner and police superintendent of Rangpur district to show cause about why action should not be taken against the concerned policemen after investigation.

The HC bench asked SI Golam Minhaj to appear before the court by April 4.

Police had information that men and women in pairs often met at Rangpur Zoo and Surovi Udyan and did unsocial activities there, the SP said at the briefing.

Besides, several guardians complained that school and college going boys and girls used to date at these places escaping their classes, he said.

"Following the complaints, a team of DB police led by Golam Minhaj raided the zoo and the park in Rangpur town and picked up 19 men and woman on Monday. After questioning, they were released from the DB office in the afternoon," the SP said.



PHOTO: STAR

Labourers of Fulbari Tea Garden in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar captured this 14-feet-long python when it came to their slum in search of prey, after swallowing two young goats earlier. Received by forest officials on Tuesday, the giant reptile was later released to Lawachhara Reserve Forest.

Death in road mishap sparks protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Hundreds of agitated people at Muthurapur put up a barricade on Thakurgaon-Baliadangi road where a local businessman was killed in a road accident on Tuesday night.

The villagers also set fire to the killer Thakurgaon-bound tractor which hit a rickshaw from behind at about 10:00pm causing death of the businessman on the spot, police and locals said.

Victim Shahidul Islam, 35, was son of Kabiruddin of Rahimanpur village under Sadar upazila. On information, police rushed to the spot while fire fighters brought the blaze under control.

Angry villagers withdrew barricade after two hours on assurance from police that the driver would be taken to task.

Earlier on Tuesday the students and locals jointly put up a barricade for two hours on Thakurgaon town-Thakurgaon rail station road at Gobindanagar village in front of Thakurgaon Silk Factory demanding speed breaker at the spot to reduce chance of road accidents.

The agitated people instantly did it when a pick-up van collided head-on with a motorbike leaving two motorcyclists seriously injured at about 11:00am.

UNB from Sherpur reports: Vehicular movement on Sherpur-Jamalpur road came to a halt for three hours on Tuesday as locals blocked the road following the death of a boy in a road accident.

Witnesses said Aynal Haq, 7, son of Atar Ali of Kulurchar village of Sadar upazila, was crushed under the wheels of a Jamalpur bound truck when he was crossing Sherpur-Jamalpur road at Kulurchar at 9:30am.

Locals enraged by the accident put up barricade on the road, halting traffic for three hours. A case was filed with Sadar police station.

Seven rooms of Devendra college dorm gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Manikganj*

Seven rooms of a dormitory of Government Devendra College were gutted in a fire on Tuesday night.

Police and Fire Service sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at room no108 of Manzurul Haque Hall at around 7:45pm and soon engulfed the room nos 109, 110, 111, 112, 113 and 114 of the tin shed dormitory.

Books, notes, academic transcripts and certificates, registration cards, birth registration cards, electric fans, bicycles and other valuables were burnt to ashes.

Being informed, fire fighters from the district headquarters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze within an hour.

During the incident, the students of these rooms were watching live cricket match between Bangladesh and England on TV in the common room.

Sanwar Hossain, a third year student of chemistry department, said his academic transcripts, SSC and HSC certificates, books and important notes were burnt to ashes. Rafiqul Islam, a third year student of accounting department, said his books, notes, academic transcripts, certificates, dresses and Tk 6,000 were burnt.

The affected students sought financial help from the college authorities to buy books and others things, which they lost in the fire. They also urged the authorities to arrange accommodations for them.

Principal Abu Bakar Siddik yesterday formed a three-member committee headed by Prof Intaz Uddin, secretary of the College Teachers' Association. The committee has been asked to submit its report within the next three days.

Contacted, Principal Abu Bakar Siddik said the college authorities will provide financial assistance for the affected students.

Local lawmaker Jahid Maleque Swapan, Deputy Commissioner GM Saleh Uddin, Police Superintendent Sheikh Muhammad Maruf Hasan, and District Awami League President Golam Mohiuddin also visited the hall yesterday and assured the affected students of financial help.



PHOTO: STAR

Seven rooms of Monzurul Haque Hall of Government Devendra College in Manikganj lie ravaged after a fire gutted the tin-shed dormitory. The fire originating from an electric short circuit destroyed valuables including students' books and academic certificates before fire-fighters doused it after an hour-long effort.

CORPORATE BOOKING

Fantasy Kingdom, Heritage Park and Water Kingdom will be reserved on 4th March '10 (Thursday) for the Annual Picnic of HOP LUN (BD) Ltd.

From 5th March '10 (Friday) all the parks will remain open for all.

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