

Thousands suffer as 6 ferries run aground

Huge traffic jam at Daulatdia terminal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Five ferries ran aground in the shoals of the river Padma creating a huge traffic jam at Daulatdia ferry terminal.

Around one thousand vehicles including buses remained stranded on the road for hours, much to the sufferings of the passengers. BIWTC office sources said, Ro Ro ferry Shah Poran

and Shah Ali started from Daulatdia for Paturia at around 4:00pm and got stuck in a shoal. Rescue boat Ashai-1 freed Shah Ali while Ashai-1 and another boat rescued Shah

Poran at around 5:00pm. Earlier, three ferries got stuck in the shoals till noon. Ro Ro ferry Shah Jalal started for Paturia from Daulatdia with 24 vehicles including passenger buses in the morning but it stuck up in a shoal near Ghat No.3.

Ro Ro ferry Shah Mokhdum with vehicles also got stuck in the shoal while trying to rescue Shah Jalal. The two ferries were rescued after one and a half hours. Ferry Birshreshtha Hamidur Rahman also remained stranded in a shoal near the terminal for about two hours after starting from Daulatdia for Paturia.

Meanwhile, the BIWTA started to remove sand with the help of two dredgers on Tuesday to keep the channel fit for ferry movement. Ferries need at least eight feet water to move but there is only 7 feet water in most of the one kilometre area near Daulatdia ghat.

Besides passenger buses, hundreds of trucks lined up on the 5-kilometre road as the truckyard was full of vehicles. The trucks have been waiting for the last four to five days, the drivers said.

Our Munshiganj correspondent adds: A ferry with forty vehicles was rescued three and a half hours after it got stuck in a shoal on Mawa-Kawrakandi route yesterday, causing immense sufferings to about 1,000 passengers.

The Mawa-bound ferry 'Bhasha Shaheed Barkat' ran aground at Markhanda channel in the Padma river at around 12:45pm and it was rescued by IT 394 ferry at 4:30pm, said Sirajul Haque, manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Mawa.



Two salvage ships are in operation on the Padma to free Ro Ro ferry Shah Poran, one of the five ferries, ran aground in the shoals of the river, below, hundreds of vehicles, including passenger buses, remain stranded on the road leading to Daulatdia terminal.

TK 25 CR 'MISAPPROPRIATION' BY GAS OFFICIALS Warrant against two, 5 get bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A special tribunal in Sylhet yesterday issued warrant of arrest against two former senior officials of the state-run Rupantorito Praktik Gas Company Limited (RPGCL) while granted bail for five others in the case for allegedly misappropriating petroleum items worth Tk 25 crore during 2002-2003 to 2006-2007 fiscal years.

Judge of the Special Tribunal-1, Sylhet-Md Mizanur Rahman, also the district and sessions judge, ordered issuing arrest warrant against former managing director of the RPGCL-engineer Abdul Wadud and former deputy manager Jasim Uddin Chowdhury for their non-appearance in the case, said Luthful Kibria Shamim, public prosecutor (PP) of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The officials who got bail are Md Zahidul Islam, deputy manager, Planning and Development, RPGCL Hq- (the then marketing officer of the fractionation plant), engineer Shuvo Barua manager, CNG workshop, RPGCL, Dhaka, (the then manager and in charge of Kailashtila LPG fractionation plant), Sheikh Md Kamal Uddin, deputy manager, Operations, RPGCL headquarters, (the then deputy manager, production, Fractionation plant), Abdul Khaleque Khan, general manager (Planning and Development) and Khalilur Rahman, deputy manager.

However, RPGCL Managing Director engineer Shafiu Azam appeared before the court and informed that he had obtained bail for four months from the High Court on August 23, the PP said. The tribunal judge also set the next

date of hearing on October 9, he added. The country's lone fractionation plant of RPGCL produces liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by processing natural gas from Sylhet Gas fields Limited.

The then ACC chairman on July 30 of 2007 ordered the director of Sylhet ACC office for investigation on a written complaint of gross misappropriation against several officials, goes the prosecution.

As preliminary enquiry found the allegations true, ACC Assistant Director in Habiganj Md Abdul Mazed, asked by his higher authorities, filed a specific case with Golapganj police station on March 9 in 2009.

Later, the ACC formed a three-member expert committee that filed a report on April 6 in 2011, detailing incidents of meter tampering and some other irregularities.

KIBRIA KILLING CASE

Prosecution takes more time for lack of regular judge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Prosecution took further time in the case for killing SAMS Kibria and four others yesterday as the trial court is running without a regular judge. However, the acting judge of the court set 20 September as the date for next hearing.

Contacted, special public prosecutor of Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal Ashoke Kumar Kar told this correspondent that due to absence of a regular judge, the trial of the sensational case could not be

resumed even months after filing of the supplementary chargesheet.

The process of hearing of the supplementary charge sheet and the 'Naraji' petition filed against it by victim's wife Asma Kibria also remained pending, he added. CID submitted the supplementary charge sheet in Habiganj Chief Judicial Magistrate Court on 20 June last. It reached Speedy Trial Tribunal three weeks ago.

Lawyer Alamgir Bhuiyan Babul filed a 'Naraji' petition against the supplementary charge sheet on behalf of

Asma Kibria, as she termed the charge sheet incomplete and flawed one. The CID, in the supplementary charge sheet, had dropped the main culprits and kept only the hired men as accused, Asma said, demanding further probe into the incident.

The special public prosecutor said, we appealed for new date as the court had no judge. The post remained vacant for the last 6 months following transfer of the previous judge. Accordingly, the District and Sessions Judge of Sylhet Md. Mizanur Rahman, who is holding the

additional charge of the tribunal, set the next date on 20 September.

The special PP said that nine among the 14 newly charge sheeted accused in the highly sensational case are still absconding.

Former finance minister SAMS Kibria, his nephew advocate Shah Manzurul Huda, local AL leaders -- Abdur Rahim, Abul Hossain and Siddique Ali were killed in a grenade attack at a public meeting at Baiderbazar of Habiganj Sadar upazila in the night following 27 January of 2005.

4 to die, 13 get life for murder in Habiganj

UNB, Habiganj

A court here sentenced four people to death and 13 others to life imprisonment in a murder case on Tuesday.

The convicts who got death penalty are Wafidul, Nazrul Islam alias Noja, Foysal Mia and Wali Mia.

The life term convicts are Taitul Mia, Sujat Mia, Sanu Mia, Bilal Mia, Helal Mia, Asadul, Rezaul, Sekul, Ranju, Sposta Begum, Sufia Begum and Khairul Mia.

The court also fined the death penalty awarded convicts Tk 10,000 each. The life term convicts were also fined Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer six months more RI.

According to the prosecution, Amin Choudhury alias Swapan of village Shibpasaha in Ajmiriganj upazila was murdered by the convicts of the same village following an altercation over money transaction on June 18, 2006.

Later, a case was filed accusing 27 people by the brother of the deceased.

After examining the records and witnesses, Additional District and Sessions Judge A K M Zahurul Alam pronounced the verdict in the crowded courtroom acquitting 10 others.

6 Myanmar citizens arrested for intrusion

UNB, Rangamati

Six Myanmar citizens were arrested for entering into Bangladesh territory illegally at Kaptai jetty ghat in Kaptai upazila yesterday.

The arrestees were identified as Nasir Hossain, Khairul Amin, Md. Naim, Md. Syed, Md. Yunus and Md. Janaid.

Tipped off, Kaptai police aided by an intelligence agency officer, arrested the Myanmar citizens from an engine-run boat at the ghat at around 10 am when they were leaving for Farua in Bilaichhari upazila.

Police also arrested Deb Chandra Tongchongako, a local resident, on charge of helping them entering into the country.

Kidnapped girl rescued, three held

UNB, Laxmipur

Police on Tuesday rescued an 11-year-old girl from Dhaka after seven days of her abduction from her house at Toomchar village in Sadar upazila and arrested three men in this connection.

The arrestees were identified as Ali Hossain, 20, his father Abdur Rahim and his brother-in-law.

Police said Ali Hossain of the village tactfully took Munni Akhtar, a student of class V and daughter of Hosneara Begum, out of her house to go on a visit on the Eid day and since then she remained missing.

On Monday, mother of the victim filed an abduction case with Sadar PS accusing seven people including Ali Hossain.

Later, police arrested Ali Hossain's father and his brother-in-law for interrogation and as per their information police rescued Munni and arrested Ali Hossain from Dhaka.

The reason behind the abduction could not be known immediately.



People of Kalmati village in the char (landmass emerged from the riverbed) area of Teesta River in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila show signs of despair after hearing that Bangladesh and India failed to sign any deal for sharing water of the river during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit ending yesterday.

FAILURE TO INK A DEAL Frustration grips people of Teesta River basin

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Several lakh people of 70 villages in Teesta River basin areas under five upazilas of the district are unhappy as Bangladesh and India failed to sign any deal on sharing the river water during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit ending yesterday.

Around 30,000 acres of land in char (land emerged from riverbed) areas around the Teesta is lying unused for years as farmers cannot cultivate paddy and other crops there due to lack of irrigation water from the river, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Lalmonirhat.

Visiting several villages in Teesta char areas of Lalmonirhat Sadar, Aditmari

and Hatibandha upazilas yesterday, this correspondent observed a general sense of frustration among the locals as they had already known that no deal was signed for sharing Teesta River water.

"Hearing the news of Indian prime minister's visit, we became happy thinking that a deal to share the water of Teesta River would put an end to our sorrow. We hoped that adequate irrigation water from the river would help to cultivate our lands that lay fallen for long. But all our hopes have been dashed," said Mozidul Islam, 55, a farmer of Kalmati village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

"I thought Indian prime minister's visit to Bangladesh would appear as

a blessing for the people living in char areas around Teesta River. But my thought proved wrong," said Taher Miah, 75, of Gobordhon village in Aditmari upazila.

"Like me, several thousand fishermen find it difficult to maintain our family as very little fish is found in the Teesta River due to fall of water level during the last several years. Hearing that no deal was signed to share Teesta River water, now we see a bleak future," said Nogendra Dash of Parulia village in Hatibandha upazila.

Many farmers and fishermen, too worried about the effect of the scanty river flow on their livelihood, did not even feel like talking on the matter.



People of Dahagram-Angorpota enclave in Lalmonirhat bring out a 'victory' procession yesterday following a deal with India to keep its Tin Bigha corridor open for 24 hours.

Dahagram celebrates while other enclaves unhappy

STAR NATIONAL DESK

People of Dahagram--Angorpota brought out a victory procession yesterday as the governments of Bangladesh and India on Tuesday signed a protocol on keeping the Tin Bigha corridor open for 24 hours.

On the other hand, the inhabitants of other enclaves in the four northern districts are frustrated with the deal on exchange of enclaves as there is no time frame for implementation of the agreement.

Mofizer Rahaman, leader of Garati enclave in Panchagarh, yesterday said they will start fast unto death at the Shaheed Minar in the district town today demanding early exchange of enclaves.

According to our Lalmonirhat correspondent, the people of Dahagram--Angorpota took out a victory procession in the enclave yesterday noon, hugged each other and distributed sweetmeat.

Kamal Hossain, 45, a resident of the enclave said, "We are happy as our long-time demand has been fulfilled. Now we are independent, we will taste of independence."

"Now we can freely move to the mainland as the Indian iron gate at Tin Bigha corridor remains open round the clock," he said.

Mamta Uddin, 73, another resident of the enclave said, "We have become independent. Now we can freely move through Tin Bigha corridor as Indian restriction on our movement has gone with the signing of protocol."

exchange of enclaves was not mentioned in the deal signed on Tuesday between India and Bangladesh.

The people of different enclaves in four northern districts on Tuesday gathered at different areas of the enclave to bring out processions. But they went back home with frustration as no specific time was mentioned for exchange of enclaves in the deal.

It was a renewal of Mujib-Indira Treaty of 1974. No new thing was added to the deal for relief of the enclave people, said Golam Mostafa, general secretary of Bangladesh-India Enclave Exchange Implementation Committee.

Mofizer Rahaman, leader of Garati enclave in Panchagarh, yesterday said the enclave people will start fast unto death at the Shaheed Minar in Panchagarh town today demanding immediate exchange of enclaves. Assistant Secretary of Bangladesh-India Enclave Exchange Implementation Committee Deepiman Sen Gupta told this correspondent over cellphone that the agreement is just a renewal of Mujib-Indira Accord of 1974. It will not bring any good results to the enclave people as there is no specific time frame for exchange of enclaves.

According to official estimates, Bangladesh has 51 enclaves inside India. Similarly, India has 111 enclaves inside Bangladesh.

Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh are situated in four districts -- Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Nilphamari-- while all 51 Bangladesh enclaves are in Indian Cooch Behar district.