

Ferry stands against desire for trip to Kuakata beach

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Local passengers as well as tourists to Kuakata sea beach are suffering a lot due to poor ferry service at Labukhali terminal on Barisal-Kuakata road via Patuakhali.

Two out of three ferries on the route have remained dysfunctional for the last six

months while the lone working one often requires repair, said sources at the terminal.

Passengers' sufferings mount when the ferry goes out of order on the middle of the river and floated away by tide. Vehicles get stranded on both sides on the river, making a large number of passengers wait for hours.

"On Monday noon, the

ferry carrying 12 vehicles was coming to Patuakhali side from Barisal but when it reached the middle of about half-km wide river its engine went out of order and the boat was floated to Kanki area, about three-km in the west. After trying for about three hours, the engine became active and the ferry

service resumed," said Abdullah Al Mamun, leaser of Lebukhali ferry ghat.

Again the next day, afternoon, the ferry service remained stopped for over an hour in the afternoon, he said.

Abdur Rashid Pada, a local businessman, said traffic jam has become a regular affair due to disturbance in ferry service on the route that serves as link with Kuakata sea beach and other parts of the country.

"I had to wait for two hours as the ferry got stranded at the Barisal end when its engine went out of order. If the situation continues tourists will lose their interest to visit Kuakata," said KM Enayet Hossain, a development worker in Patuakhali, who went to Barisal on Friday last.

Abdul Kuddus, supervisor of the ferry terminal, said, "When the engine goes out of order I inform the authority of the matter. Then engineers and mechanics come to the spot and repair it. Rise of the riverbed at the Barisal end is also responsible for disruption of ferry service as the ferry often gets stuck on the alluvial land during the low tide. In such a situation, we have to wait for high tide for resumption of ferry service."

When contacted, Suvas Chandra Biswas, executive engineer for Ferry Division in Patuakhali, claimed that the ferry service on the route is okay.

"If any ferry goes out of order we repair it immediately. Every engine has to rest after 12 hours," he said.

Asked about the traffic jam, he said, "It is an artificial problem for which the lessee and a section of staff employed for maintenance of the ferry service are responsible."



The lone functional ferry on Paire River at Lebukhali on Barisal-Kuakata road floats at the mid-river after its engine went out of order on Tuesday. Inset, vehicles get stuck in a long tailback following disruption of the ferry service.

PHOTO: STAR

SECOND DAY OF SBMCH STRIKE

Interns force senior docs to stop outdoor services

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Patients' sufferings mounted as interns at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) continued indefinite strike for the second day yesterday protesting assault on interns by attendants of a female patient who died at the hospital Wednesday morning.

The agitators also forced the senior doctors to close outdoor services at the hospital soon after it started at 9:00am yesterday.

The interns also burnt tyres and newspapers, held procession and chanted slogans in 'protest' against publishing reports about the sufferings of patients due to the strike.

The number of admitted patients in the 500-bed hospital was 1289 on yesterday morning but over one hundred patients left the hospital as medical services and different other facilities remained suspended there due to the strike, SBMCH sources said.

Barisal City Corporation Mayor and city Awami League convener Shawkat Hossain Hiron visited the hospital yesterday morning, assured legal action against the assaulters and requested the interns to withdraw the strike on humanitarian grounds.

The SBMCH authorities, who formed a two-member probe committee and lodged a case in connection with the incident, urged the interns to withdraw their strike, but to no effect, said Ferdous Ahmed Shibir, director

of SBMCH.

"We have vowed to continue the strike as safety and security of the on-duty doctors was not assured. We suspect that police will not investigate the case properly as the assaulters were led by Mamun Rashid, a constable of Rangamati police station, also son of the deceased," said Mehedi Hasan, president of SBMCH Intern Doctors Association.

Shaheduzzaman, officer-in-charge of the Kotwali police station, said, "We received the case, lodged by SBMCH director, on charge of creating obstacle to performing public duty and assaulting government staff on duty. As name of any accused was not mentioned in the case, it will take time to arrest the attackers after investigation."

Karimunnesa Bibi, 60, was admitted to the Women's Medicine Ward 3 at the hospital at 2:20am on Wednesday after suffering a brain stroke, and she died there at 6:30am.

Alleging negligence in treatment, the patient's attendants physically assaulted Tanmoy Barua, the on-duty doctor at the ward, and Mehedi Hassan, the interne doctors' leader at the hospital.

After the incident, the interns brought out processions on the hospital campus, held a protest rally and suspended all medical services at the hospital from 8:00am Wednesday.

Made of precious metals, its market price could be worth Tk. 1 crore, they said.

25 hurt in clash

UNB, Sunamganj

Twenty-five people, including women, were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers following a dispute over a piece of land at Madhupur village in Dirai upazila on Wednesday afternoon.

Locals said there was a longstanding dispute between freedom fighter Abdul Ahad and Boktar Ali of the village over possession of the land.

As a sequel to the dispute, their supporters equipped with lethal weapons locked in a clash, leaving 25 people injured at about 5.00pm.

Critically injured Abdul Ahad, 60, M Shafikul Islam, 21, Azad Mia, 30, and Taher Ali, 55, were admitted to Osmani Medical College Hospital.



PHOTO: STAR

Patients coming from far and nearby places of Barisal town had to return without treatment as the interns at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College and Hospital continued their indefinite strike for the second day yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR
An elderly Chaka woman makes threads by spinning wheels at Bain Ghar (weaving house) at Rajban Bihar in Rangamati on the occasion of Kathin Chibar Daan, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist community, yesterday. Chakma Raja (king) Barrister Devasish Roy looks on.

Kathin Chibar Daan fest begins in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Kathin Chibar Daan, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist people in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), began yesterday at Rajban Bihar of the Chakma king with great enthusiasm and festivity.

Earlier, the festival committee, known as Upasak Upasika Parishad (UUP), of Rajban Bihar had completed all preparations to hold the 39th Kathin Chibar Daan festival this year.

The two day programme includes Pancha Shila prayers by weavers, making threads by spinning wheels, boiling, colouring and drying of threads, sewing of chibar (robes), hoisting Buddhist flag, donation of chibars to the monks and candle lighting etc.

The entire Rangamati town wore a festive look yesterday. Thousands of people, mostly Buddhist devotees from three hill districts---Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari gathered in and around the Rajban Bihar.

Chakma Raja (king) and chief of Chakma Circle Barrister Devasish Roy inaugurated the festival

Bishakha, a nurse of Goutam Buddha, introduced the religious festival about 2500 years ago. Since then the Buddhist community celebrate the Kathin Chibar Daan or the yellow robes offering ceremony every year.

The chibars (robes) are made of cotton and sewed by devotees under several preconditions for which it is termed *kathin* (difficult).

The Chakma Raja sought all-out cooperation from all to hold the programme peacefully. He greeted the people of different religions and called for maintaining religious harmony.

On the occasion, a village fair has been arranged in and around Rajban Bihar.

Tourists from Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Germany and Nepal were seen at Rajban Bihar yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR
BRAVO! Defeating nature's challenge, poor but meritorious Belal Hossain appears in primary terminal examination with the help of his toes at Umedpur Dakhil Madrasa centre under Neelganj union in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali yesterday.

Benapole port sees slump in revenue earning

UNB, Benapole, Jessor

Revenue income at Benapole land port has largely declined in the first four months of the current fiscal year (2012-13) due to various reasons, including alleged corruption and irregularities.

On this day in 1971, the Pakistani occupation army killed 43 people, including Terosree College principal Atiar Rahman and then Zaminder of the Terosree Siddheswar Prasad Roy Chowdhury.

The Pak soldiers also burnt down houses at the village.

Sources alleged that

corruption and irregularities took a grievous form in the biggest land port of the country from the beginning of the current fiscal year.

A new strong syndicate, managing customs and port officials and ansar members with bribe, continue to evade huge taxes against the imported goods, they said.

Customs authorities of the port realised Tk 672.16 crore revenue during the period, which is Tk 172.94 crore less than the target set for the time.

Besides, due to high tariff, many importers now opt for using Hili land port and Sonamasjid land port for their business, a trader said.

Benapole customs house

joint commissioner Md Akbar Hossain, however, said that import through the land port decreased due to strict monitoring for checking tax evasion.

He said revenue income from the land port was Tk 2312.47 crore against the target of Tk 2425 crore in the 2011-12 fiscal year.

The target of revenue earning of the 2012-13 fiscal year is unlikely to be achieved, as assumed from the four months' income, sources said.