

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 distur-

bance 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 Paira 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



Precious statue found in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A Buddhist statue worth about Tk 1 crore was recovered from a pond near a high school in Behula Lokindorer Bashorghor area of Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

Police quoting locals said, on Wednesday, a group of people were fishing in the pond. At that time a Buddhist statue caught in the net of a man.

Chairman of Gokul UP Abdul Momin, hearing the news, took necessary steps with the help of village police and recovered the statue from Bablu Mia's house.

Police said that the statue weighing 22 kilograms was 22 inch high and 12 inch wide.

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.

Local sources 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 5.00 pm.

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

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 Mamunur Rashid, a constable of Rangamati police station, also son of the deceased," said Mehedi Hasan, president of SBMCH Interne 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."

Karimunnisa 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.



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.

Girl raped in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

An indigenous girl was kidnapped from a residential hotel at Reserve Bazar in the town and allegedly raped by a Tripura youth on Wednesday night.

The victim hailed from Uttar Khagrachhari village under Baghaichhari upazila of the district.

Kotwali police yesterday arrested accused Romesh Tripura, 30, son of late Biro Kishore Tripura of village Gorjantoli in the town from Launchghat at Reserve Bazar, said Md. Jan-e-Alam, investigation officer (IO) of Kotwali police station.

Romesh forcibly took the girl to another hotel and violated her there, police said.

On information, Kotwali police rescued the girl in an unconscious condition from the hotel yesterday morning. Later on the basis of the statement of the girl, police arrested the youth, said the IO.

The girl had come to the town with two friends to join Kathin Chibar Dan festival of the Buddhists, police said.

Terosree massacre recalled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

'Terosree massacre day' was observed on the Shaheed Minar premises at Terosree under Ghior upazila yesterday.

People from all walks of life, including freedom fighters and government officials, placed wreaths at the memorial in the morning.

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.



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 days 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.

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 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

through opening the Bain Ghar (sewing room) and spinning wheel at 3:00pm at Rajban Bihar.

In his speech, Raja Devasish said every year we hold this great religious festival to uphold our religious spirit amongst the Buddhist people and to preserve our tradition and customs that we have been following since time immemorial.

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, Jessore

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.

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.

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.

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.