

# BGB removes 39 mines from Myanmar border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) removed at least 39 land mines from the areas close to Myanmar border pillar 44 at Kachubunia in Naikkhongchhari of Bandarban district yesterday.

BGB sources said, the newly formed Myanmar border force had been planting land mines along the Zero Point of the border for the last one week, violating international border rules.

Recently a team of Myanmar border guards conducted a survey of 200

points along the border between the two countries.

After the survey, which ended on December 10, the Myanmar forces started their mine planting without informing it to the Bangladesh side.

On December 18, mines were planted along 30 kilometres of the Ashartoli border in Naikkhongchhari and the border villagers informed it to the 31 BGB Battalion.

Shamim Iqbal Chowdhury, a local of Naikkhongchhari told this correspondent that former Myanmar border force

Nasaka did the same thing on the border around 8-10 years ago, causing death of several Bangladeshis and cattle heads.

Lt Col Shafiqur Rahman of 31 BGB Battalion yesterday said they found the allegations made by the Bangladesh border people true and already sent a strong note of protest to the Myanmar authorities in this regard.

He also confirmed that 39 mines were removed from the border.

We have reinforced border patrol in those areas, he added.

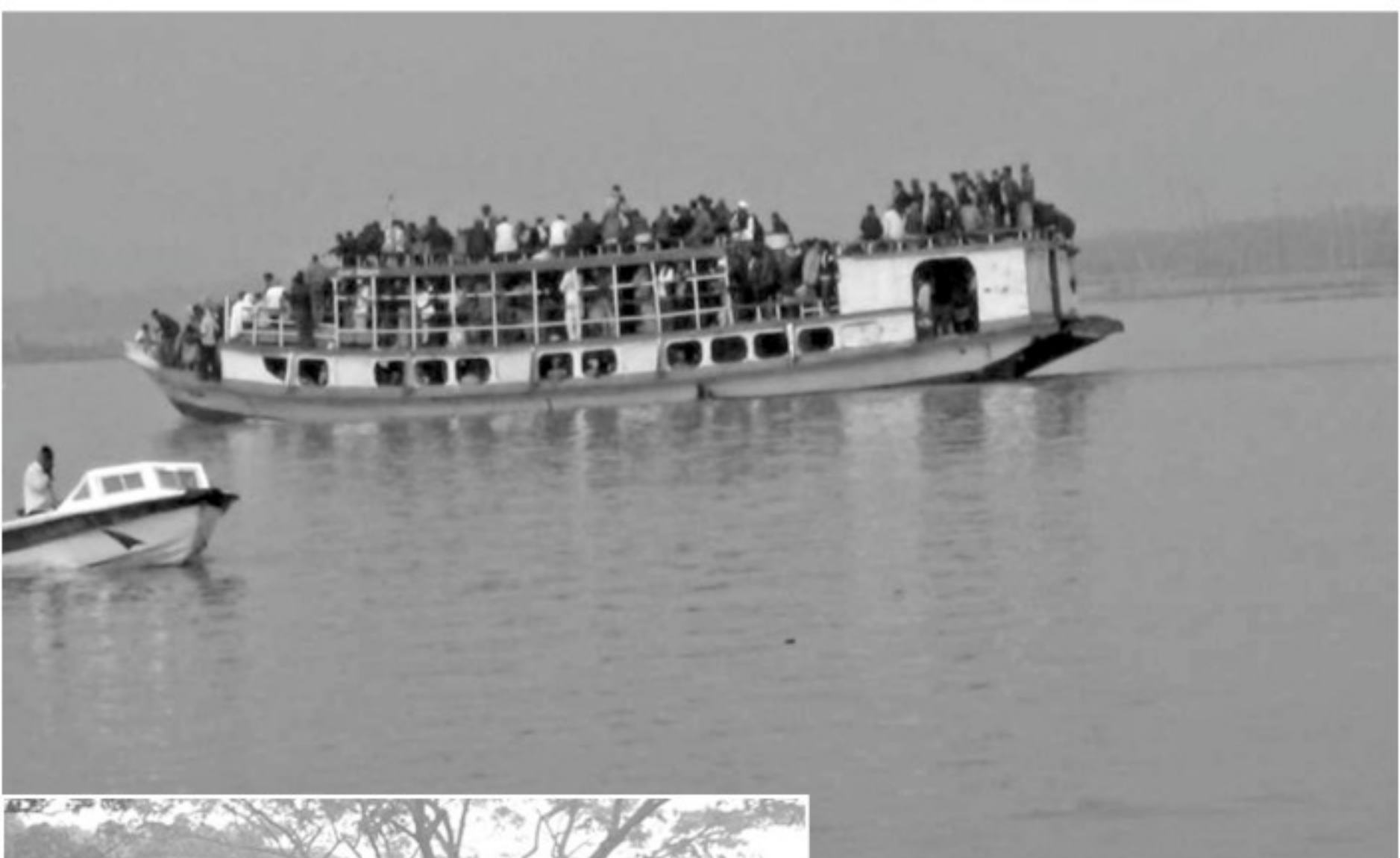


PHOTO: STAR

A passenger launch sets off from Kewrakandi terminal in Shibchar of Madaripur after 12 hours of departure time due to dense fog yesterday, inset, suspension of ferry service for over 10 hours at Mawa terminal in Munshiganj has caused a long queue of freight trucks.

## Dense fog disrupts ferry services on two routes

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Ferry operation on Mawa-Kewrakandi and Paturia-Daulatdia routes resumed yesterday morning after a suspension of over 10 hours due to poor visibility caused by dense fog.

Ferry service on the Mawa-Kewrakandi route resumed at about 8:00am after a halt for over 10 hours, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation manager Sirajul Haque said ferry operation on the route remained stranded from 9:00 pm on Friday due to dense fog.

Ro-Ro ferry Shah Makhdum that started from Mawa Ghat at 11:00pm got stuck in Magukhanda Channel due to poor visibility.

Over 600 vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the Ghat.

The situation caused immense suffering to several hundred people on the ferries.

Our Madaripur correspondent adds: Nine ferries that were stuck with around 300 vehicles in mid-river of Friday night

resumed their operation at Kewrakandi after the disappearance of fog at about 10:00am.

Five hundred passengers, including women and children, suffered on the ferries while over 200 vehicles remained stuck on the bank of the Padma amid severe cold.

Ferry operation on the Paturia-Daulatdia route resumed at 9:00am yesterday after a halt of 11 hours, reports UNB from Manikganj.

Mohiuddin Rasel, manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Aricha Ghat, said they kept stopped ferry services and plying of the water vessels from about 10:00pm on Friday because of blurred visibility due to dense fog.

Five ferries -Bhasha Shaheed Barkat, Shahjalal, Matiur Rahman and Kopoti-remained stranded in the middle of the river Padma.

Around 1000 goods-laden vehicles and passenger buses had to remain in wait at Paturia Ghat for the halt to ferry service.

The disruption to ferry movement created a 5-kilometre tailback at Paturia Ghat.



PHOTO: STAR

A portion of this bridge on Gandapur Canal in Rangabali upazila of Patuakhali gets damaged for lack of renovation. Vehicles as well as pedestrians cross the awfully dilapidated bridge amid risk of accident.

## Rangpur Sugar Mills finally starts cane crushing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Sugarcane crashing at Rangpur Sugar Mills in the district finally began on Friday with a production target of 4,500 metric tons of sugar.

Earlier the mill was scheduled to start can crushing on December 13, but it

could not do it due to hartals and blockades enforced by the BNP led 18-party alliance. The mills, however, went into production after two weeks of suspension.

The mill authorities this season have fixed a target of 4,500 metric tons sugar production by crushing 70,000 tons of sugarcane. The mill will run for 52 days.

Last season, the mill produced 2,700 tons of sugar by crushing 49,325 tons of cane.

The mill could not sell its produced sugar for the last two years. The sugar is now lying piled up in mills godowns due to fall of market price, said Abdul Khaleque, managing director of Rangpur Sugar Mills, Gaibandha.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

LIFE GOES ON: Despite dense fog and chilling cold, people come out for routine jobs in Gaibandha. The photo was taken in Sadar upazila at 11:00 in the morning yesterday.

## Poor people, kids bear brunt of cold spell

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Biting cold coupled with persistent dense fog has paralysed normal life both in the urban and rural areas of five upazilas under the district.

The poor people, especially those living in the Teesta and Dharla river basin char areas, are the worst sufferers as they can hardly afford warm clothes that see price rise amid higher demand.

Rangpur Met Office recorded yesterday's lowest temperature 11 degrees Celsius in the morning. The sun remained invisible during the last two days.

Many distressed people are trying to fight the bone chilling cold with the heat from burning straw and old rubber tyres. Animals in sheds are covered with old sacks.

Hospitals and clinics are crowded with patients as cold-related diseases like fever, cough and cold, diarrhoea, dysentery, bronchitis and asthma see alarming rise.

Farmers and day labourers cannot work in the field due to severe cold.

"I along with family members are suffering a lot as I cannot go to field for work due to biting cold and dense fog for the last couple of days," said Nishi Kanta Barmon, 62, at Rajpur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

Over a thousand people including aged ones and children gathered as six volunteer youths from the town came to distribute 100 pieces of blankets at Baruya village of Kulaghat union in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila on Thursday morning.

## 6 girls back home after three years' jail in India

UNB, Benapole, Jessore

Six Bangladeshi girls returned home through Benapole check post of the district on Friday night after languishing for three years in an Indian jail.

The returnees hail from different areas of the district.

Nayek Subedar M Abdullah, commander of Benapole check post Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Camp, said Border Security Force (BSF) of India handed over the Bangladeshi girls, who were jailed for intruding into the country, to the BGB there at night.

Quoting the returnees, the commander said, human traffickers took the girls, aged between 17 and 22, to India in January, 2010 promising to arrange lucrative jobs and Mumbai police arrested them on charge of intrusion.

They were later produced before a court that sent them to an Indian jail.

The decision of their release came following a joint intervention of the home ministries of India and Bangladesh.

"Most of the cold hit people returned empty handed as we had only 100 blankets," said Tuku Islam, a member of the team.

"At least seven thousand poor people living in the char villages in my union are badly suffering due to the heavy cold but I got only 710 pieces of blanket from the government authorities. I have already distributed these to the most needy people," said Khatib Uddin, another Teesta River basin union parishad Sindurna UP chairman of Hatibandha upazila.

"The district administra-

tion has distributed 3,400 pieces of warm clothes to the cold victims of five upazilas early this month. NGOs, voluntary, socio-cultural and charitable organisations have also distributed warm clothes among the distressed cold-hit people, but the effort is too little for the requirement," said Mahasinul Haque, district relief and rehabilitation officer of Lalmonirhat.

"I have written to the ministry concerned, seeking 15 thousand blankets on an urgent basis," he added.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

An elderly man tries to take refuge in a wrap in shivering cold in Rangpur district yesterday.

## SNIPPETS

### Outlawed party puts up posters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An outlawed party has put up posters in Tarash upzila of Sirajganj district much to the worries of the people of Chlanbeel region. Police and locals said some outlaws of Sarbahara faction in the name of 'Janata Party' pasted 25 to 30 posters at Katagari Bazar in Deshigram union under the upazila on Thursday night. The texts of the posters urged the people to be united for 'communist uprising'. On information, the law enforcers removed the posters, said officer in-charge of Tarash police station Md Abdur Rafique.

### Motorbikes of AL men torched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Four motorbikes of local Awami League supporters were torched allegedly by BNP-Jamaat men in Kalabari area of Shibganj upazila yesterday. Locals said, BNP-Jamaat men set the motorbikes on fire at 3:15pm when the AL supporters were returning home after attending a workers' meeting of the party. Golam Rabbani, local AL leader and MP from Chapainawabganj-1 (Shibganj) constituency, called the meeting at his village home in Pukuria. Local AL men blamed Jamaat-BNP men for the arson attack. Mizanur Rahman, officer in-charge of Shibganj police station, said they were investigating the matter.

### Boy hurt in explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A schoolboy was injured in a bomb explosion at Taragon village in Akhaura upazila on Friday. He was identified as Yasin Mia, 9, student of class two at Taragon Primary School and son of Md Milon Mia of the village. Police and family sources said, Yasin found a 'colourful thing at a field' near their house. It suddenly exploded when the boy was playing with it. He was admitted to the upazila health complex, said Ang Sha Tuai, OC of Akhaura police station.

### Jubo Dal man hurt in attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A local Jubo Dal leader was seriously injured in an attack by criminals on Friday night at Charakhali in Rajapur upazila. He was identified as Kismot Faraji, vice president of the upazila Jubo Dal unit and son of Gani Faraji of the area. A gang attacked Kismot with sharp weapons, leaving him seriously injured while he was standing in front of his house, said family members. The reason behind the attack could not be known immediately, said police.

### 15 shops gutted in Bhola

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

At least 15 shops were gutted in a fire at Dularhat Bazar under Charfassion upazila of the district yesterday. Locals said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a shop on the northern side of the Bazar at around 3:30am and soon spread to the adjacent shops. Abul Bashar, officer in charge of Charfassion PS and Sirajul Hoque Mridha, station officer of local fire service said that two fire fighting unit doused the blaze at 5:30am.

### New BAU hall soon

BAU CORRESPONDENT

Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Prof Dr Md. Rafiqul Hoque yesterday laid the foundation stone of a hall for female students on the campus. The five-storey hall with 600 seats will be built on 400 square meter area to remove the sufferings of the female students, said Prof Md. Abdur Rashid, Convener of the Planning and Development Committee at BAU. The construction work will start in January, 2014 and it will take two years to complete the hall, he said. BAU already has three halls for female students but those are not sufficient to accommodate even half of the female students.

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