

Saidpur airport fails to change with time

Still remains outdated, awkward

EAM ASADUZZAMAN,
Nilphamari

Saidpur airport in the district still functions mostly with outdated analogue system, making the establishment under the government's civil aviation department most backward air travel operating centre of the country.

In absence of online system, postal service or courier service is used for despatch of official letters while mobile phone is used

to convey important messages, which poses the risk of hampering privacy.

Important office works in engineering section, mechanical section, accounts section, and even in weather section are being done with traditional system, mostly using typewriters.

This airport got a few computers several months ago but most of them are lying unused due to lack of skilled manpower, office sources said.

Recently the airport authority took initiative for imparting computer training to several staff in order to get all the official works done with computer and introduce online system at the airport, sources said.

"It is true that most official works at this airport are still being done in traditional system. After my joining here a few months ago I am trying my best to adopt modern digital system in all official works," said Shahin Ahmed, manager of Saidpur airport.

In 2008, Bangladesh Biman stopped operation of commercial aircraft on Dhaka-Rajshahi-Saidpur route showing the cause of continuous losses although a good number of passengers used to make air journey on the route, said locals and sources at Saidpur airport.

Especially high government officials, businessmen and foreign experts often travelled by air to Saidpur to get to nearby Uttara EPZ in Nilphamari, and Madhyapara hard rock mine and Boropukuria coal mine in Dinajpur.

The air travel also helped executives and delegates of many international organisations and donors conducting various programmes in the region. But suspension of air operation by Bangladesh Biman left the airport with only a little work. Presently non-government airline United Airways regularly operates commercial aircraft to and from Saidpur airport and they use online system for ticket selling and other services with their own equipment and manpower.



PHOTO: STAR

Believe it or not, Saidpur Airport in Nilphamari district is yet to see digitalisation, making services there awfully tardy.

Six kids drown in four districts

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Six kids drowned in Dinajpur, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Habiganj districts yesterday and the day before.

Two children drowned in a pond in Sadar upazila of Dinajpur yesterday noon, reports our correspondent.

The deceased are Shifat Hossain, 5, son of Mohammad Al-Amin and Mohammad Fardin, 5, son of Mohammad Rumen of Kasba village under the municipality area.

Family members of the deceased said, Shifat and

Fardin fell into a local pond and drowned while they along with some other children of their ages were playing beside it.

Meanwhile, two children drowned at two villages under the Sadar upazilas of Panchagarh and Thakurgaon districts on Friday.

Maruf, 07, son of Nurunnabi drowned in Talma River in Panchagarh Sadar upazila on Friday, our Thakurgaon correspondent reported that.

Family sources said, Maruf and his younger brother Sagar went to visit

their grandfather's house at Gofapara village. On Friday afternoon, both of them went to the river to take a dip, suddenly a strong tide swept away Maruf while Sagar managed to ashore.

In Thakurgaon, a minor girl drowned in a pond at Gilabari village in Sadar upazila on Friday.

Umme Hani, 3, daughter of Harun-or-Rashid of the village, was playing in the courtyard of their house. At one stage, she went close to the pond adjacent to their house and fell in it.

In Habiganj, two siblings drowned in a pond at Kalikrishnanagar village in Madhabpur upazila on Friday evening, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent.

The deceased are Suma Akhter, 8, and her younger sister Ruma Akhter, 5, daughters of Shamim Mia of the village.

Police said the duo were playing at a field near their house around 4:00pm and suddenly went 'missing'.

Later, locals spotted their floating bodies in the pond around 6:30pm.

Son of Pinak-6 owner sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Munshiganj

A court here yesterday sent Omar Faruque Limon, the eldest son of the owner of sunken Pinak-6, to jail.

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Limon, also an accused in Pinak-6 capsizing case, from his relative's house in the capital's Khilkhet area on Friday.

Police produced Limon in the Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Jahan Ara Ferdous in the afternoon, seeking a seven-day remand.

The court sent him to jail, fixing Monday to hear the remand prayer, said Md Tofazzal Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Louhajang Police Station.

On Wednesday, the elite force arrested Abu Bakar Siddique, owner of Pinak-6, from a house in Chittagong city.

Kid raped

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushia

A minor girl was raped at Bagjhapi village in Kalukhali upazila of Rajbari on Friday.

The seven-year-old girl is now undergoing treatment at Rajbari Sadar Hospital in critical conditions.

Victim's family sources said, on Friday evening Arif Ali Fakir, 25, son of Khoaj Fakir of the village took the girl to an isolated place alluring of buying her toys while she was playing in front of their house and violated her.

As she cried out for help, Arif fled the scene, leaving the girl critically injured.

CHAPAINAWABGANJ TOWN

Dilapidated roads make life miserable

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Chapainawabganj

Around 24 kilometres of roads in Chapainawabganj municipality area have numerous potholes and cracks causing troubles to vehicles and thousands of pedestrians.

Passenger buses, goods-laden trucks and other vehicles often get stuck in large potholes.

The dilapidated roads in the municipality area include Hospital Road, Mistiripara, Godagari Road at Puraton Bazar, Kanthalbagicha, Shahibag-Horipur Road, Shehala-Chouhodditola,

Rajrampur, Belepukur, Pathanpara- Powerhouse Intersection, Lakherajpara, School- College Road and Old Bus Stand area of the town.

In particular, the Hospital Road and Godagari Road, where the district wholesale kitchen market, police station, post office, Sadar Hospital, registry office and dak bungalow are situated, are in worst condition.

Patients and regular passengers from the bus terminal suffer most due to traffic jam on the bumpy roads.

Traffic congestion is aggravated further by

encroachments on both sides of the roads by vegetable vendors and other small traders.

Lack of repair work, pressure of vehicles, lack of drainage of rainwater and poor maintenance by the authorities concerned are responsible for the water logging and awful condition of these roads, locals observed.

Abdul Matin, mayor of Chapainawabganj municipality, said they have already started the repair work of several roads of the town on Tuesday last and hope to complete the job by the end of December.



PHOTO: STAR

Large potholes make this important road in front of the customs office at Lakherajpara in Chapainawabganj town hazardous for vehicular movement. Most other roads of the district headquarters are also in similar conditions.

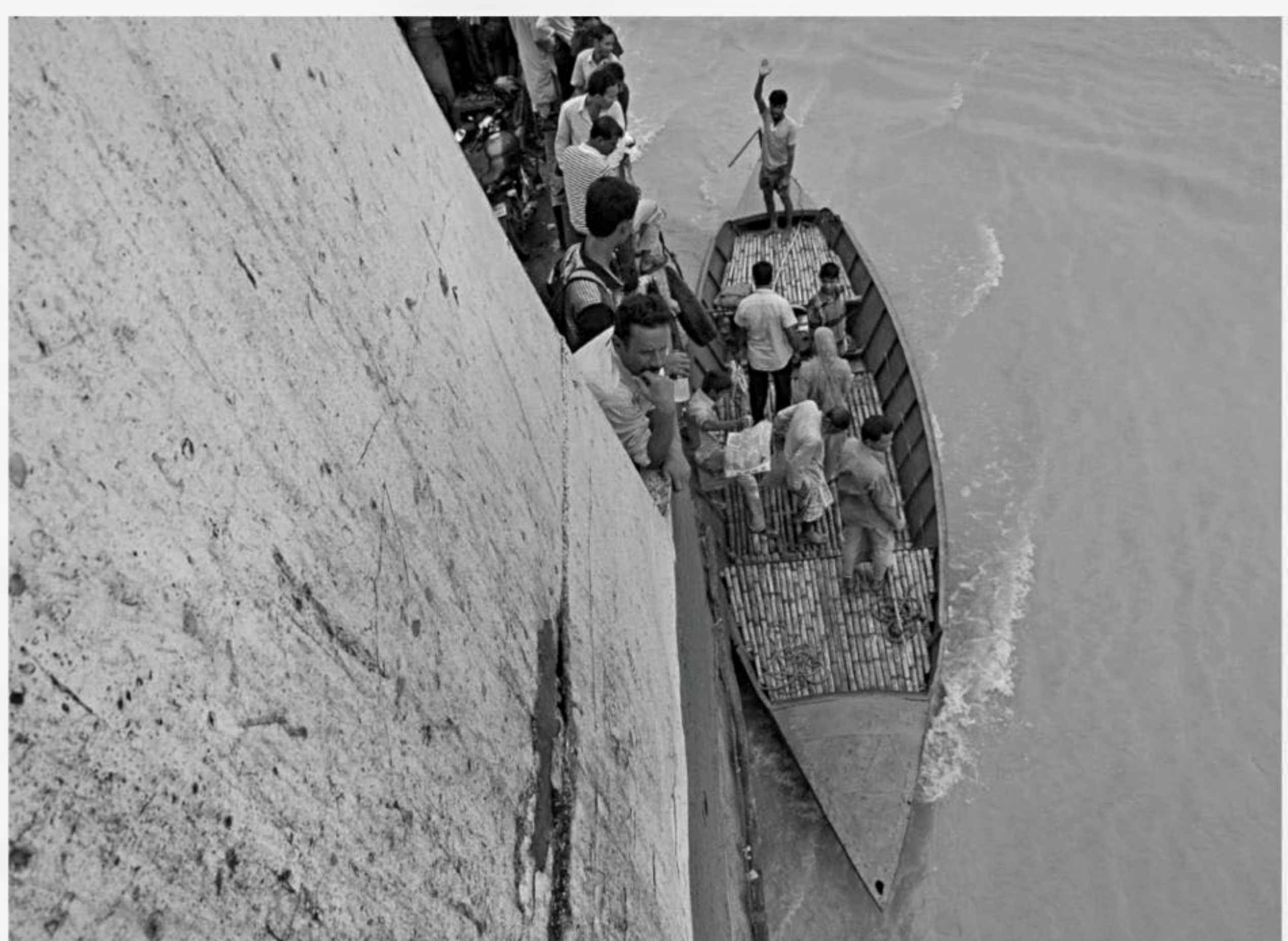


PHOTO: STAR

TOO CALLOUS TO CARE FOR SAFETY: People, including women and children, from a running ferryboat in the mid- Padma near Kanthalbarighat jump into a small engine boat that had rushed there and dashed into the ferry, wooing passengers to Shariatpur. The risky practice continues even after the Pinak-6 launch capsized tragedy claimed over a hundred lives in the same river on August 4.

'Stop torture, killing of indigenous people'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangpur

A human chain was formed in the town yesterday, demanding immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits who beat up and raped an indigenous woman leader in Gomostapur upazila of Chapainawabganj on August 4.

Several hundred people joined the human chain in front of Rangpur Press Club at noon. The participants also demanded arrest of the killers of Subol Hajong and Dudu Soren.

Subol Hajong, 55, was killed at Deflai village in Jhinaigati upazila of Sherpur district on July 27 while Dudu Soren, 50, at Derkamari village in Nawabganj upazila of Dinajpur district on August 2.

Addressing a rally in front of the local press club yesterday, the speakers blamed police inaction for not bringing the rapists of the indigenous woman leader to book.

They urged the government to ensure security of the indigenous people and their right to land.

A gang of 30/35 criminals demanded Tk 3 lakh from the president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad Chapainawabganj unit when she along with her labourers was planting aman seedlings on her land at Zinapur village under Parbatipur union of Gomostapur upazila at noon on August 4.

As the indigenous woman leader, also the member of Parbatipur Union Parishad, refused to pay heed to the demand, the gang members beat her. Some of them later took the leader to one side of the farmland and raped her.

3 go missing in Rajbari boat capsizing

UNB, Goalanda, Rajbari

Three people went missing as a boat capsized after being hit by a ferry in the Padma River near Daulatdia ferry terminal in Goalanda upazila of Rajbari district on Friday evening.

Of the three, two were identified as Razi and Likhon while the identity of the other victim could not be known.

Locals said, the boat carrying 16 passengers, sank in the river when a Patuaria-bound utility 'Shapla-Shaluk' ferry hit it while heading towards Daulatdia from Kazirhat around 7:30 pm.

Later, 13 passengers were rescued by the local people while three went missing during the incident.

Grabbing of temple's land sparks protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat

A local influential man allegedly grabbed three out of eight decimals of land of a Hindu temple at Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila on Friday, claiming its ownership.

The Hindu devotees of the village lodged a complaint in this regard with Sadar Police Station the same day.

Sushil Chandra Roy, president of the temple management committee, said Abdul Malek of the village and his men illegally occupied three decimals of land in front of Sree Sree Durga

Mandir on Friday afternoon and erected 26 concrete pillars around the land.

Local Hindus built the temple on five out of eight decimals of land donated by Baneshwari Bala and Phulchandra Chandra Barmon in 1995, he added

Contacted, Abdul Malek said he purchased the land from late Nagendra Nath 28 years ago. "I am the owner of the land as I have all legal documents in support of my claim," he said, but could not show the documents.

Nagendra Nath's son Dulal Chandra Roy said his father sold 75 decimals of lands to Abdul Malek beside the land

hedonated to the temple.

"Malek didn't claim the ownership of the land when my father was alive, Dulal said, adding that Malek grabbed the roadside land of the temple considering its location and high rate.

Hindus of the village protested the matter and urged the local administration to take necessary measures to free the land of the temple.

Officer-in-Charge Mahfuzur Rahman of Sadar Police Station said Lalmonirhat Puja Uddjapon Parishad has taken the responsibility to settle the matter amicably within the next few days.



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers sorting out dying aman saplings at a damaged seedbed at Marichabari village of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat.

SCANTY RAIN DURING MONSOON

Aman saplings dying on seedbeds in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Aman paddy saplings are dying in the seedbeds due to a drought like situation prevailing in the district for the last one month.

"I prepared a seedbed on 20 decimals of land for T-Aman saplings this year. Of them, one fourth of the saplings got damaged in the seedbed due to scanty rainfall," said farmer Harendra Nath Barmon at Marichabari village in Aditmari upazila.

"I was waiting for rainfall for 20 days, and the saplings on 4 of 12 decimals were damaged during the time. Finally, I cultivated my lands using underground water," said another farmer, Idris Miah, of same village.

Azizul Islam, a farmer at Sarpukur village in Aditmari upazila, said due to poor rain-

fall and drought like situation during the monsoon, about 20 percent aman paddy saplings were damaged in his village.

At least 200 farmers in the village were now facing shortage of saplings, he said.

Department of Agriculture Extension office sources said, at least 3,000 hectares of land were prepared as seedbeds for aman sapling with a target to cultivating the paddy on about 81,000 hectares of land in five upazilas this year. They admitted that a huge quantity of saplings got damaged due to scanty rainfall and drought like situation.

Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Agriculture Officer Nuruzzaman, however, said that dying of samplings will not have too bad impact on aman farming.

Bridal party trawler looted, 10 hurt

UNB, Munshiganj

Robbers looted valuables, including cash and gold ornaments worth Tk 10 lakh, from a trawler carrying a bridal party in the Padma River at Nayanagar village in Gazaria upazila on Friday night.

Shafiqul Islam, a member of the wedding party, said 10-12 robbers on a fishing

trawler intercepted the boat carrying a bridal party while they were returning home with the bride from Matlab around 8:30 pm.

At one stage, the robbers kept all the passengers of the trawler hostage at gunpoint and started stabbing the bridal party members, including bride Tania, 19, and bridegroom Rubel, 30, son of Yusuf

Mia of Mahmudnagar under port thana of Narayanganj district, leaving 10 people injured.

Later they looted valuables, including 15 tolas of gold ornaments, cash and 50 mobile phone sets.

The injured were rushed to several hospitals and clinics in Narayanganj.