

Sufferings continue on ferries

STAR REPORT

The sufferings of people from 21 districts in the country's south and south-western parts are continuing due to a disruption in ferry services on both Shimulia-Kathalbari and Pataria-Dauladia routes, as they head back to the capital after Eid vacation.

Yesterday, thousands of passengers and several hundred vehicles had to wait for hours on both sides of the routes to cross the Shimulia-Kathalbari route, only eight small ferries were operating in place of 21. Due to a lack of navigability caused by continuous siltation, the ferries were carrying lightweight vehicles.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reported that police forbade the heavy vehicles like buses and trucks to use Shimulia-Kathalbari route. And more than a hundred lightweight vehicles like cars were waiting on both sides of the route to cross the river.

Khaled Newaz, assistant general manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Shimulia Ferry Ghat said they cannot provide normal ferry services to the passengers due to the siltation, let alone special service for the Eid.

To minimise the disruption, BIWTC is operating the ferries amid risk of being stuck in silt, he told the correspondent.

Only 1,344 lightweight vehicles were transported on the route on Wednesday whereas around 4,000 vehicles were transported every day during previous Eid seasons, he said. The government is deprived of a huge revenue

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City dwellers have started to stream back to the capital after celebrating Eid-ul-Azha with near and dear ones. The photo was taken yesterday around 2:00pm at Kamalapur Railway Station. PHOTO: RASHED SHUON

Five killed in four districts

At least five people were killed in road accidents in four districts yesterday.

In the capital's Basabo, two cousins were killed when a city corporation vehicle rammed a motorbike they were riding in front of the Buddhist Monastery early yesterday.

The deceased are Rimon, 25, and his cousin Shariq, 22, said Officer-in-Charge Kuddus Fakir of Sabujbagh Police Station, reports BSS.

They were declared dead in Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In Chittagong city, an unidentified woman aged around 35 was killed after being hit by a locally-improvised passenger vehicle at Bahaddar intersection yesterday, says another

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India's support to Myanmar shocks BNP

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP yesterday expressed surprise over India's support to Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi's policy on the Rohingya issue.

"India claims to be one of the democratic countries, but they've extended their support to Aung San Suu Kyi's policy. Narendra Modi supported it. We're surprised and shocked," said BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

He was talking to reporters at a human chain formed by Jatya Baid Muktejjodha Dal in front of the capital's Jatya Press Club protesting the persecution of Rohingyas by Myanmar's security forces.

He also criticised the

Responsibility lies with all

Civil society representatives urge global leaders to work together in solving Rohingya crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society representatives yesterday demanded that the global leaders and the United Nations (UN) put pressure on the Myanmar government to stop "ethnic cleansing" and persecution against Rohingyas.

Condemning Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi's role, they said the decision to put pressure should be made in the next meeting of the UN Human Rights Council scheduled to be held on September 11. The Rohingya issue must get the highest priority, they added.

The Bangladesh government should strengthen its diplomatic activities. The neighbouring and friendly countries have to come forward to solve the issue, they observed.

The observations were made at a press conference organised by Shubashanwer Jonmo Nagorik (Shujan), a civil society platform, at the capital's Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Thousands of Rohingyas entered Bangladesh within the last couple of weeks

following the Myanmar government's military drive in its Rakhine province.

At the conference, Dhaka University Professor CR Abrar said Bangladesh alone cannot take responsibility of all the Rohingyas refugees.

Although the country is primarily providing shelter to them, other neighbouring countries should take initiatives to rehabilitate them, said Abrar, a professor of international relations.

Strong diplomatic activity is a must to put pressure on the Myanmar government in order to stop the military drive and take back the Rohingyas, he said. He also urged the global leaders to impose economic sanctions on Myanmar.

Writer and columnist Syed Abdul Maksud said, "The Rohingya issue has fallen into a vicious political cycle. We want a proper and peaceful solution..."

Echoing Maksud, Shujan Secretary Badul Alam Majumdar said, "If the issue is not resolved, the situation will worsen."

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Take steps to revoke Suu Kyi's Nobel Peace Prize

SCBA urges UN, global leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association has urged the United Nations and world leaders to take steps to revoke the Nobel Prize from Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi, if she does not step in to stop repression and torture on the Rohingyas.

"Humanity is being violated in Myanmar and the brutality is taking place at the direction and instigation of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi-led government... We are urging the United Nations and the world leaders to take steps regarding how the Nobel Prize can be taken back from her if she does not stop repression and torture on the Rohingyas," said SCBA President Advocate Zainul Abedin.

He said this while reading out a written statement before the reporters at a press conference organised by the association in its auditorium on Wednesday afternoon.

The SCBA president requested the Bangladesh law enforcers to give shelter to the Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar.

The repression and cruelty by Myanmar army, police and border force on the minority Rohingyas have crossed all the records, he said.

He said their [security forces of Myanmar] behaviour is a clear violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 and UN's International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The SCBA president demanded that the Bangladesh government and local administration ensure the lives and properties of the Rohingyas who have taken shelter in the

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Enslaved in the Kingdom

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Bangladeshi female workers continue to come home from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with harrowing tales of modern slavery.

Grotesome accounts of rape, physical abuse, forced labour and bondage in that country will haunt these women for the rest of their lives.

Rozina (not her real name) is one of four such exploited women who returned home from the KSA last month. Rozina and two other women were brought back together on August 25.

The foreign ministry brought the three women back after Anwar ul Plight Kendra (ASK) came to learn about their plight and drew the ministry's attention.

Rozina had decided to take the job of a household worker in the KSA as her husband, a betel nut seller in Dhaka, cannot provide for the family.

The family is in urgent need of a large amount of money for their seven-year-old son's cleft palate surgery.

The educational expense of their eight-grade daughter is also creating an extra pressure on the low-income family.

In pursuit of the better future for the family, the 27-year-old mother, Rozina, risked all and boarded a plane to Saudi Arabia in January this year.

"I was first sent to a house in Dammam. After working there for a month, I requested the madam [the housewife] to pay my salary. But she said that she would pay me by the end of the second month," Rozina told The Daily Star during an interview on August 28.

As she badly needed to send the money home, she did not agree with her employer's offer and argued strongly for immediate payment of her salary.

Her argument infuriated the employer and she was sent back to the office of the employment agency in the city with one month's salary.

For the next 15 days she was confined to the house of the agency owner's relative before being "sold" to a broker.

The broker, a Saudi man, took Rozina to his house in the city of Hafar Al-Batin.

There she was forced to do household work without any commitment of payment. "They didn't even care to give me food or

water. Starved, I had to drink [unsafe] water from the bathroom," Rozina said trying to vainly hold back tears.

After she was allowed to go outside for making a phone call back home, Rozina escaped and reported the Saudi man's abuse to the nearby police station.

Instead of taking any action against the broker, the police held her over to him.

After regaining control over her, the broker became ruthless, she said, adding, "Whenever I requested him to send me back home, he beat me mercilessly and threatened me with my life."

Unable to bear the torture, Rozina escaped for the second time when she went out of the house to throw out garbage.

She again reached out to the police to complain about the Saudi's abuse. But the police returned her to the same man without repatriating him.

Over the next six months the man continued to force Rozina into work in at least six different houses — sometimes for seven days, and sometimes for a month, Rozina said.

During this time she was not paid a single penny, she alleged.

Desperately seeking a way out, Rozina approached another Saudi man and described her ordeal to him. The man helped her go the police station in Hafar Al-Batin to file a complaint again.

The police this time kept her in their custody for 15 days, she said.

To her disbelief, for the third time, the police took the broker's side and physically assaulted her before handing her over to the broker.

"I blacked out after the police slapped me on my right cheek five times and four times on the left," Rozina said crying.

After picking her up from the police custody, the broker sent Rozina to the employment agency's office in the city of Dammam. She was kept in captivity there for 10 days with two other Bangladeshi women.

The other two women had been enduring similar abuse of bondage and forced labour, she said.

Ain o Salish Kendra found out about the plight of the three women after one of them secretly contacted her family back home in Bangladesh, using messenger application Imo on her cellphone.

Sheepa Haifiza, executive director of ASK, SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Rozina was confined to the house of a Saudi man for 15 days before being "sold" to a broker.



Turkish First Lady Emine Erdogan calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the latter's office in the capital yesterday. Emine is in the country to meet Rohingyas, who have fled to Bangladesh in the face of violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State. PHOTO: BIDDING

Cocaine haul case

Court orders further investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cgd

A Chittagong court yesterday ordered Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to further investigate the cocaine haul case of 2015.

The court of Chittagong Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Shah Noor passed the order after the prosecution expressed discontent on the second charge sheet of the case filed under Special Powers Act, 1974.

In its order, the court asked Rab to further investigate the case by a Rab official with Additional Superintendent of Police rank, said Public Prosecutor (PP) Fakhruddin Chowdhury.

On August 9, the prosecution expressed discontent over the case's second charge sheet, which was submitted this year on May 14 to the court by Mohammad Kamruzzaman, additional deputy commissioner, Detective Branch (DB) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

In the charge sheet, Khan Jahan Ali Group's Chairman Nur Mohammad, the prime suspect of the cocaine haul case, was not implicated in the list of eight accused persons.

The first charge sheet of the case was

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Abdullah planned massive attack

Suspects Rab after anti-militancy operation in Darus Salam; two including house owner arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday said they suspected that militant Abdullah, who was killed along with six others during an operation at a flat in the capital's Darus Salam, was planning a massive attack on a highrise building.

The remarks came after the force recovered a model of a highrise with different kinds of marking from Abdullah's rented flat on the fifth floor of the six-storey building "Kamol Proba".

After clearing the flat of the militant suspect on Wednesday, Rab found remains of seven people a day after the suspect allegedly detonated bombs there causing a blaze.

In an unusual death case filed by a Rab deputy assistant director with Darus Salam Police Station yesterday Rab identified five of the dead as Mir Akrabul Karim alias Ulal alias Abdullah, 43, his wives Nasrin, 35, and Fatema, 25, sons Osama bin Akrabul, 10, and two-and-a-half-year-old Omar bin Akrabul.

Meanwhile, one Bahal Malek from Elisha of the Boda yesterday claimed that one of the dead was his son, Kamal, 22.

Following autopsy, Dr Sohel Medineh, head of the forensic medicine department at Dhaka Medical College, said the bodies were burnt but some splinters were found in them.

"The building design was not supposed to be in his flat as it would not match with Abdullah's profession," said commander Mufit Mahmud Khan, commander of the legal and media wing of Rab.

"He might have planned a massive attack in any highrise building,

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Members of Bangladesh Coast Guard (Chaka) stand in front of a pile of contraband "khan net" they seized from Islamiya Moanon Market in the capital's Chowkbazar area yesterday. The team conducted a drive at the market from 5:00am to noon. They recovered 1.5 crore metres of "current net" worth Tk 30 crore from six shops there. The raid was conducted with the assistance of the Department of Fisheries. Later, the nets were collected, according to a press release. PHOTO: COLLECTED