



Out of operation ferries lying on the bank of the Andharmanik river in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali.

PHOTO: STAR

Ferries, pontoons rusting away

Useless 13 ferries, 11 pontoons under open sky getting damaged in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Thirteen ferries, 10 pontoons and two gangways, which have been out of operation, are getting damaged in different ferry terminals in the district.

There are nine terminals in the district, of which four are not operating as bridges have been built over the rivers. The bridges are all

on the Kuakata-Barisal highway.

Patuakhali Bridge over the Lawkathi river opened in 2005, and Sheikh Kamal Bridge over the Andharmanik river, Sheikh Jamal Bridge over the Sonatala river and Sheikh Russel Bridge over the Shibbaria river, all in Kalapara upazila, opened in 2015.

Though bridges were built and ferry services stopped, the ferries,

pontoons and gangways are still kept at those terminals.

There are two ferries each in Boga and Galachipa terminals, three ferries and one pontoon each in Kalapara and Hajipur, two ferries and three pontoons in Mohipur, one ferry and five pontoons in Patuakhali, and two gangways in Hajipur, said district Ferry Division Executive Engineer

Shamimul Haque.

Md Jasim Uddin of Kalapara terminal area said the ferries are getting damaged by the salt water.

Sabbir Rahman of Hajipur area said parts of the ferry have been stolen as there is no guard. The authorities concerned should take immediate steps to repair the ferries or sell them to get revenue, he suggested.

"We sent several letters to the higher authorities about the matter, but in vain," said engineer Shamimul. "We will take steps after getting decision from the higher authorities," he added.

Roads and Highways Department Executive Engineer Mir Nizam Uddin said process of selling the useless ferries, pontoons and gangways is underway.

Missing schoolboy found dead in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A 10-year-old schoolboy was found dead in Phulbaria upazila of the district on Tuesday, four days after he went missing on Friday.

The deceased, Muklesur Rahman, son of Ashraf Ali of Koyarchala village, was a Class III student at a local primary school in the upazila, police said.

Police quoted victim's family members as saying that Muklesur along with some of his friends went to attend an Urs, a religious gathering, about a kilometre away from his house on Friday evening and did not return home.

Failing to know his whereabouts, Muklesur's family members filed a general diary (GD) with Phulbaria Police Station on Monday, said Sheikh Kabirul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station.

Villagers spotted his body floating in a ditch at the village and informed police, who recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for autopsy, the OC said, adding that no injury mark was found on the body.

Motor parts trader turns successful farmer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A battery and motor parts trader in the city has turned into a fruit and vegetable farmer as he wanted to give his son fruit and vegetables that have not been treated by chemicals.

"Rajin, my eight-year-old son, always wanted to eat fruits but I could not give him any because the fruits in the market are treated with chemicals. Then I started malta farming on some of my three acres of inherited land four years ago. Now I cultivate mango and bottle gourd. I have also started fish farming there," said Sadik Hossain, 40, of Dinar village in Sadar upazila.

"I have been farming bottle gourd for the last three years. I cultivated at least 300 plants in my farm and earned Tk 30,000 by selling the produce. I sell 80 to 100 gourds every week for Tk 40 to Tk 60 each. The season will continue up to March," he added.

"I do not use any chemicals in my garden because I know they are harmful," Sadik said.

District Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Fazlul Haque said over a hundred farmers of Sadar, Banaripara and Ujirpur upazilas have cultivated bottle gourd and earned huge profit.

He said DAE block supervisors advise farmers to cultivate vegetables, and cultivation is increasing.

Sadik told this correspondent that people, especially marginal farmers, are being benefited by bottle gourd farming in this area.

According to DAE officials and farmers, bottle gourd farming has gradually gained popularity in the area in the last two or three years. Suitable weather, low production cost and good demand encouraged the farmers, they said.



Bottle gourds in Sadik's field at Dinar village in Sadar upazila of Barisal. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

One to die, 30 others jailed for killing in Bagerhat

The court also fines them Tk 20,000 each

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A court here yesterday sentenced a man to death, and awarded life imprisonment to another and five years' imprisonment each to 29 others for killing Sohrab Hossain in Morrelganj upazila of the district in 2001.

The court also fined all of them Tk 20,000 each, in default, to serve one more year in jail.

Judge Md Zakaria Hossain of Bagerhat Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court-2 announced the verdict yesterday.

Atahar Ali, alias Poran Babu, son of Yusuf Tarafdar of Dema village in Sadar upazila, was given death sentence and Abdur Rashid was given life time imprisonment, said Assistant Public Prosecutor Shita Debnath.

According to the case statement, a gang of 30 to 40 criminals, led by Poran and Yusuf, attacked the village home of Sohrab Hossain on June 18 in 2001 over a land dispute. They held the family members at gunpoint and exploded bombs to create panic.

When Sohrab tried to escape, the criminals shot and hacked him to death.

Victim's wife Kohinur filed a murder case with Morrelganj Police Station the same day.

Step to stop river erosion demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Local people in Charbhadrashan upazila of the district recently formed a human chain in Joydevpur Sarkarer Dangi area demanding steps to stop erosion by the river Padma.

Demanding immediate step to protect their homesteads and croplands, many erosion victims of Char Hossainpur, Joydevpur Sorkarar Dangi and Modhu Fakirer Dangi villages formed the human chain on the bank of the Jamuna river on Sunday.

"We came to know that Water Development Board is taking preparation to build an embankment in the area," Gazirtek Union Parishad Chairman Yakub Ali said, adding, "We want them to build that before the upcoming rainy season."

Charbhadrashan Upazila Parishad Chairman AGM Badal Amin and its Vice-chairman Kawsar Hossain spoke at the programme.

Woman gang-raped

Two alleged rapists land in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Two men accused in a gang-rape case were sent to the district jail yesterday.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Waheduzzaman gave the order after police produced them before his court with a five-day remand prayer. The magistrate fixed February 18 for the hearing.

The accused are Mahabub Hasan Samrat, 30, son of Zulfikar Haidar of Junail Pakkhimari village, and Hamidul Islam Likhon, 30, son of Farhad Hossain of Gabergram Jhalupara village in Madarganj upazila.

They were arrested in the upazila on Tuesday, said Officer-in-Charge of Madarganj Police Station Rafiqul Islam.

On Monday night, Samrat along with one of his accomplices on a motor-bike picked up a 20-year-old married woman of Balijuri Panditpara village from in front of Brac office in the upazila and took her to his house. Samrat and six other people raped her overnight, said the OC.

Following a complaint filed by the victim's family members, police arrested the duo on Tuesday evening. The victim later filed a gang-rape case, accusing six people including Samrat and Likhon.

The other accused include Kabil, 33, Monohor, 32, Sohag, 35, and Shahinur, 30, of the upazila.



A gladiolus flower land in Piarpur area of Faridpur Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Flowers boon for farmers

The cultivation in Faridpur is getting popular as it is commercially profitable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Profitable cultivation of flower is gaining popularity among farmers in Madhukhali and Sadar upazilas. They are now commercially cultivating gladiolus and marigold on their farmlands.

Gladiolus flower is harvested within 90 days and grows all the year round, said grower Md Anwar Hossain of Ghonoshampur village in Sadar upazila.

"I have been cultivating gladiolus on 16 decimals of land for four years and marigold on 60 decimals of land for three years," he said.

"At first Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Faridpur gave me 2,000 seed of gladiolus four years back, but now I can sell seed of gladiolus. I get Tk 2,000 profit from one decimal of land by farming gladiolus and marigold every year," said Anwar.

"Flower cultivation needs a good amount of investment as it is much more profitable

than traditional agricultural items. I also started rose cultivation on 10 decimals of land from this year," he said.

Moslam Uddin of Piarpur area said he has been cultivating gladiolus for three years after he did not get profit from his paddy field.

"I am now cultivating gladiolus on seven acres of land. I sell my flowers in the local market and Dhaka," he said.

Sadar upazila Agriculture Officer Md Abul Bashar Mia said flower cultivation has become very popular among the farmers of Ghonoshampur, Molikpur, Piarpur and Poranpur areas in Sadar upazila and Paikgachi and BoroGopaldi areas of Madhukhali upazila.

Deputy Director of Faridpur DAE Kartik Chandra Chakraborty said flowers are being cultivated on around 5 hectares of land in the district.

Farmers of different upazilas have been interested in cultivating flowers as it is more profitable than other items.

38 BNP-Jamaat men get bail in Comilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A court here on February 11 granted bail for 38 BNP and Jamaat activists on charge of hatching conspiracy for carrying out sabotage activities after the verdict of Khaleda Zia's graft case on February 8.

However, only one of them got released while 37 were sent to jail in another case the following day.

The BNP and Jamaat men include district BNP vice president Fazlul Haq Fazlu and Joint Convener of Chhatra Dal Reaz Hossain.

Mustain Billah, judge of the cognizance court No 1, passed the order.