



A large number of country boats are brought for sale at Ghior Haat in Ghior upazila of Manikganj. Inset, the floating boat market on Kuriyana canal at Atghar village in Nesarabad upazila of Pirojpur.

Elderly man beaten dead in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

An elderly man was mercifully beaten to death in remote Etchari area of Sadar upazila on Friday.

The deceased was Bimal Chakma, 60.

United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) yesterday said at a press release an armed group abducted Bimal from the area on Thursday. He died due to inhuman torture.

UPDF blamed Jana Sanghati Samity (MN Larma) for the murder.

Despite repeated calls this correspondent could not reach Sudhakar Tripura, information and publicity secretary of MN Larma, as his phone remained switched off.

Man's illicit affair led to wife's death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A woman was killed allegedly by her husband at Potonushar village in Kamalganj upazila on Friday night.

The deceased was Shahana Begum, 25, wife of Ferdous Mia of the village.

Her father Kador said Shahana married Ferdous five years ago. Ferdous fell in love with another woman of the village. He often threatened to kill his daughter when she protested his extra-marital affair.

The victim's elder brother alleged that Ferdous strangled his sister following an altercation over the issue.

Police said they will know if it was murder or not after they get the autopsy report.

Brisk business in country boats

Markets abuzz with activities as sale heightens in monsoon and buyers and sellers throng Nesarabad of Pirojpur, Manikganj for the cheap wooden water transport

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Boat markets in different areas see hectic sale during the ongoing rains as the traditional item becomes indispensable for movement of people and transport of goods, especially in low-lying areas.

A good number of buyers and sellers from different areas come to the century-old boat market on Kuriyana canal at Atgar village in Nesarabad upazila of Pirojpur as small and cheap country boats serve as convenient mode of transport in the southern region crisscrossed by rivers and canals.

The biggest boat market in the southern region sits every Friday and Monday and 400 to 500 boats arrive there each of the market days.

The boats are mostly made of wood from different locally grown trees like rain tree, chambol, mahogany and gaab.

It costs Tk 1,600 to Tk 5,000 to make a boat and each sells for Tk.2000-8000, depending on wood, size, design and overall quality, said buyers and sellers.

An ordinary boat can be used for one season while good quality boat can last for two years, said Dhirendronath, a buyer at the market.

Traders buy these boats from carpenters in different areas of Nesarabad and then bring them to Atghar market by trawlers or large boats.

The boats are used for carrying guava and other fruits and vegetables from gardens as well as for movement of people.

Buyers and sellers have expressed dissatisfaction over lack of facilities at the market area.

"Although the lease-holder earns money from the trade, there is hardly any facility in the boat market. When it rains heavily, we get wet as there is no shed in the market," said Abdus Salam, a boat trader.

Md Mostofa Jaman, lessee of the market, said, "We informed the authorities concerned of the matter but no step has been taken. This year we paid Tk 28 lakh as lease money to the government and it's their responsibility to make shed for the buyers and sellers in the market."

Steps will be taken soon to mitigate the sufferings of the people coming to the boat market, said Abu Sayeed, upazila nirbahi officer of Nesarabad.

Our Manikganj Correspondent reports: Boat markets in the district, including Ghior Haat and Tara Haat in Ghior upazila, Jhitka Haat in Harirampur, Jamsa Haat in Singair and Ulail Haat in Daulatpur upazila are buzzing with activities as country boats see good sale during the ongoing rains.

Many traders from Goyhata Haat, a big boat market in Nagarapur upazila of Tangail, also bring country boats to markets in Manikganj.

Visiting Ghior Haat on Wednesday, this correspondent saw a large number of wooden dinghy boats kept in for sale as their demand sees rise due to the increase in water of the rivers of Manikganj and flooding of low lying areas.

Many boat makers said they remain busy making boats three to four months of the year.

Mostly wood from jamrul, chambol, koro, mango, kadam and shimul trees are used for making the boats.

It costs Tk 1,800 to 2,500 to make each boat, 9 feet to 15 feet in length.

Depending on size and quality of wood, the boats are sold at Tk 2,500 to Tk 4,000.

Nirod Bhowmik of Kushtia village under Nagarapur upazila in Tangail said after purchasing nine boats for Tk 22,500 from Goyhata Haat, he sold those for Tk 27,000 in Ghior market on Wednesday.

Jagdish Chandra Sarker of Shibpur village in Ghior upazila said he made six boats with chambol wood in last three days and brought those for sale at Ghior Haat on Wednesday.

Nearly half of around 2,000 boats bought to Ghior market on Wednesday were sold, said Khagendra Nath Tarafdar of Gazisail village in Daulatpur upazila of Manikganj.

"I bought an 11-foot-long long dinghy boat for Tk 3,000 as we need it badly for movement," said Md Farhad of Kahetara village in Ghior.

Several buyers said the boats are a bit pricier than last year.

Ramshackle community clinics risky to patients

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Seventeen out of 37 community clinics in Sakhipur upazila have turned risky as they have not been renovated for several years.

The clinic buildings at Mohanandapur and Jadavpur have been abandoned after their walls collapsed a couple of years ago. The authorities are providing health care services to children and women in rented rooms, said Mizanur Rahman, head assistant of Sakhipur Upazila Health Complex.

The buildings of the community clinics turned risky within a few years as they were constructed with cheap materials, he said.

Health care activities are going on in the vulnerable buildings of 15 other clinics in spite of the risk of accidents, he said.

Cracks have developed on the walls and chunks of plaster fall off in the clinic buildings as they have not been repaired for several years, he added.

The community clinics have no electricity connection, so patients and health workers suffer during hot

weather, Mizanur said.

The laptops provided for the clinics are unused or out of order. The health providers keep the laptops at their homes due to lack of security at the clinics, he said.

Moreover, the heads of the tube-wells at most of the clinics have been stolen and the bathrooms of most of the clinics are unusable, he added.

Meanwhile, a community health care provider (CHCP), a health worker, and a family welfare assistant provide primary health care services to children and pregnant women at the clinics from 9:00am to 3:00pm. The clinics provide services and advice to the women, especially before and after pregnancy, so that they can get necessary health care and advice near their homes.

Pregnant Mariam Begum visits Protima Bonki community clinic for getting health care services, but is afraid to enter the dilapidated building.

Mohanandapur clinic CHCP Mohammad Ariful Islam said the building of the clinic was abandoned

as patients did not want to sit inside it, fearing that it would collapse. Health services have been provided to the patients at a nearby rented room for the last few months, he said.

Atiapa clinic CHCP Abu Hanif said water leaks through the roof of the dilapidated clinic building during rain.

Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Belayet Hossain said they have made a list of the risky community clinic buildings in the upazila and sent it to the District Health Engineering Department (HED).

The community clinic buildings at Jadavpur, Berbari, Protima Bonki and Shaliar Baid will have to be re-constructed and the 13 others need repairing, he said.

"We hope to start the work very soon," he added.

District HED Executive Engineer Golam Mahub said a list of the most vulnerable clinic buildings for repair or re-construction will be prepared and sent to the health directorate.

Alhaj Jute Mills shut

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

The authorities of Alhaj Jute Mills Ltd in Sarishabari upazila under the district closed the industrial unit early yesterday, much to the frustration of around 3,000 workers.

"The authorities closed it in violation of labour law, keeping unpaid the workers' arrear of Tk 1.7 crore. The mill has also debt of Tk 80 crore," said workers' leader Zahidur Rahman.

"Protesting the matter, the workers gathered at the mill gate around 10:00am. We have declared a seven-day programme with an ultimatum to the authority to pay workers' dues and restart the mills that has a capacity to produce 15 tonnes of jute items daily," he said.

This correspondent failed to contact the mills managing director Harun-or-Rashid and general manger Noor-e-Huda, as they did not receive repeated mobile calls.



A nature lover walking through the bird park along the Gorai river in Baruria area of Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila. Below, Kumarkhali Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shahinuzzaman inaugurated the park recently. Photo: Star

Bird park along Gorai river

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Local administration in Kumarkhali upazila has set up a park for birds along the Gorai river embankment in Baruria area.

Kumarkhali Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Shahinuzzaman accompanied by some local social workers and bird lovers recently inaugurated the park on 40 bighas of land, which will be a haven for different species of local and migratory birds.

Some local nature lovers, like poet Sohel Amin Babu, Liton Abbas and journalist Dipu Malik first discovered the location and spotted many local birds there.

Later, informed by them, the UNO visited the spot and decided to set up a park there.

"After visiting the spot I became very enthusiastic and decided to develop it as a sanctuary for birds which was already there naturally," UNO Shahinuzzaman said.

Built about six years ago, the location is basically a portion of an isolated embankment, surrounded by a large number of different local trees, to protect the Gorai river bank, the UNO said.

The spot gradually turned into a haven for birds as some migratory birds were also spotted there, he added.

"We are planning to build many things there to make it a sanctuary for birds," the UNO said, adding that local administration is trying to sanction government allocations for development of the park.

As per the plan some bird cages and a few benches will be built there soon, he added.

Two local nature lovers SI Sohel and Sahabuddin Milon personally built some bird cages there.

Poet Sohel Amin appreciated the step taken by the local administration while journalist Dipu Malik said local people are looking forward to join hands with the initiators.



Cracks have developed on the walls of Protima Bonki Community Clinic in Sakhipur upazila of Tangail, posing great risk to the patients and workers.

Drug peddler with Yaba in rectum held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A drug peddler with 1,400 Yaba tablets hidden in his rectum was arrested by Debpur Outpost police in Burichang upazila yesterday.

The arrestee is Md Ibrahim, 28, son of Abu Sufiyan of Pashchim Sathghoriya Para in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar.

"During our routine checking we detained a CNG-run auto-rickshaw passenger because of his suspicious behaviour. On interrogation, he admitted that he was carrying 1,400 Yaba tablets," Sub-Inspector Shahadat Hossain of the police outpost said.

Md Ibrahim told police that he got on a Dhaka-bound bus from Teknaf and got off at Mainamoti Cantonment. He was trying to find out new route for Yaba supply, he added.