



Passengers waiting for trains have to stay at the platform of Bogura Railway Station as the waiting rooms are hardly kept open. *Inset*, the water tank of the station has turned into a virtual garbage dumping place, thanks to the callousness of the authorities.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

BOGURA RAILWAY STATION

No waiting room, no water, no toilet

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

A large number of passengers travelling to different areas of the country from Bogura Railway Station have to suffer much due to lack of basic amenities like functional waiting rooms, drinking water and toilets.

Four intercity trains Lalmoni Express, Rangpur Express, Dolonchapa and Karatoa Express and six local and mail trains run via Bogura, carrying over 6,000 passengers from the important station daily, said officials.

But the station authorities provide hardly any service other than selling tickets, said the passengers.

Visiting the railway station around 10:45am on Saturday, this reporter found

some 200 passengers waiting at the platform.

"We have to suffer much as there is no waiting room and toilet for the passengers here," said Lovely Begum, 38, waiting with family members for an hour to get a local train to go to Gaibandha.

"The authorities are earning from sale of tickets but they are least bothered about giving minimum facilities for the passengers. You can't imagine a station without waiting rooms, drinking water and toilets, even in our neighbouring country India," said Minara Zaman, 20, another passenger of the station, waiting for going to Santahar station by train.

Bogura Stationmaster Benjarul Islam said, "We have four waiting rooms,

including an air-conditioned one on the second floor and three others on the ground floor. But these are not kept open all the time as we have only one employee instead of three for maintaining the waiting rooms."

Asked about the tube-wells and drinking water supply for passengers, he said the tube-wells got damaged nearly two years ago and the supply water tap broke six months ago.

"However, in any emergency circumstances we open the waiting rooms and let the passengers use the toilets meant for our staff," said the stationmaster.

However, this reporter found all the waiting rooms locked during his visit to the station for three consecutive days.

Aslam Hossain, sub-assistant engineer (Work) of Bogura Railway Station, said, "I joined the station a year ago, but did not see any tube-well here. I saw two heads of tube-wells kept in our office storeroom. I heard drug addicts earlier stole tube-wells."

He claimed that the railway authorities have arranged alternative drinking water service.

This reporter saw that the water supply tank had become a virtual garbage dumping place.

When asked about the matter, Aslam said, "Neither passengers nor station staff complained about this matter. If anyone complains, we will take steps to resolve the problem."

UP member's wrath on Saudi expat's wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A woman, beaten in public at a village market in the district's Chakoria upazila allegedly by a union parishad (UP) member on Wednesday, is undergoing treatment at a local private hospital.

Sara Khatun, 37, wife of Saudi Arabia expatriate Noor Mohammad, faced the brutality by the UP member when she was taking her sick child to a hospital for treatment around 5:00pm.

The incident occurred at Machghat station at Charan Dwip Dakkhin under ward No 8 of Chiringa union in Chakoria upazila.

Sara Khatun told the reporters that her husband had a feud with UP member Nazem Uddin.

"As a sequel to the feud, Nazem Uddin beat me in broad daylight. He also tried to molest me," she said.

Local people rescued her from the attacker and admitted her to a private hospital at Chakoria.

Asked about the incident, UP member Nazem said, "No such incident took place. It is a false allegation and a conspiracy against me."

Contacted, Bakhtiar Uddin Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Chakoria Police Station, said nobody lodged any complaint with the police station in this connection.

Police will take legal steps if a complaint is filed, he said.

Tension is prevailing among the local people over the incident.

Woman, daughter kill selves

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A woman and her daughter allegedly committed suicide after being humiliated by neighbours and relatives in Sirajganj Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

Police arrested the daughter's lover for instigating the suicide, said Officer-in-Charge of Sirajganj Sadar Police Station Md Abu Daud.

The deceased were Sumi Khatun, 40, wife of Abdul Mannan, and her daughter Mala Khatun, 14, of Sirajganj railway colony.

Police and family sources said Mala fell in love with local boy Manik Hossain. Recently, Mala went to Manik's house and pressured him to marry her but he refused.

Mala's parents took back her to the house then but most of their relatives and neighbours humiliated them through harsh words.

Later, Sumi and her daughter took their lives by hanging themselves from the ceiling on Wednesday afternoon.

3 war crimes accused arrested in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police arrested three people from Dhobaura upazila of the district on Wednesday evening for allegedly committing crimes against humanity during 1971 Liberation War.

The arrestees are Kitab Ali, 85, his son Abdul Quddus, 62, and Kitab's younger brother Jonab Ali, 68, of Balligaon village in the upazila.

Following a warrant of arrest, the three were held from their house. They were sent to International War Crimes Tribunal yesterday, said Md Showkat Alam, officer-in-charge of Dhobaura Police Station.

Md Shahabuddin, 70, a war victim of the same village, lodged a case with a court against the three over two years ago, said the OC.

New pontoon, broken jetty at terminal

Passengers suffer in Patuakhali's Kalapara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Passengers and labourers face great difficulties while getting on or off launches or cargo vessels at Kalapara upazila town launch terminal in Bazar Potee area due to the badly damaged jetty.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) recently placed a new pontoon at the terminal but they did not set up a new jetty to replace the badly damaged old one.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw that the wooden planks had rotten and many had been removed. Passengers have to get on and off launches using the old jetty. Labourers load and unload goods from launches and cargo vessels at great risk. The jetty goes under water during high tide, adding to the suffering of the people.

Some local people also dump garbage at the launch terminal, which spreads a bad smell in the area.

Tea stall owner Poran Babu said passengers of different routes are suffering due to

lack of a jetty there. The authorities concerned should set up a new jetty considering the passengers' interest, he added.

Abdus Sobahan, a labourer at the terminal, said the authorities set up a new pontoon there but passengers are not getting any benefit due to lack of a jetty. "We have to carry goods over the badly damaged jetty at the risk of our lives," he added.

Labourer Zakir Hossain recently sustained injuries when he fell into the river while unloading goods from a launch, Sobahan said.

Md Saidur Rahman, owner of Kalapara Express, a cargo service, said the labourers suffer a lot while loading and unloading goods as the jetty has become unfit for use.

Md Shamim, lessee of the launch terminal, said passenger launches and cargo vessels anchored at the terminal but people are suffering as the jetty is badly damaged.

BIWTA Assistant Director Khwaja Sadiqur Rahman said he has informed the higher authorities about the matter and hoped that a new jetty will be set up soon.



The authorities have placed a new pontoon at Kalapara upazila town launch terminal in Patuakhali but did not replace the damaged jetty, much to the suffering of its users. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Janata going BASIC's way

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three have had their loans restructured and are not paying their regular instalments timely.

Large borrowers are those who receive more than 10 percent of a bank's capital.

By any banking standards, this is just a perfect recipe for financial disaster and a reflection on the inefficiency of the bank's credit committee, management and the board.

A look under its hood will reveal Janata's other vital statistics too have nosedived in keeping with the way it is being run today.

A bank's capital adequacy ratio is a vital parameter to judge its health, which is measured by comparing its capital with its risk-weighted assets.

One and a half years ago, Janata's capital adequacy ratio was 10.69 percent, close to the mandatory ratio of 11.81 percent set by Bangladesh Bank. But in June this year, Janata's ratio plummeted to 5.53 percent.

When a bank's capital adequacy ratio falls below the BB-set bench-

mark, a red flag is raised and various restrictions, including a limit on giving fresh loans, are imposed on the bank.

Janata had only 5 percent of its loans marked as defaulted in December 2010, the lowest among all the state-owned banks. But with more and more of its large loans going bad, its defaulted loans rose to 21.95 percent in June this year. This is an astounding depletion of a bank's asset quality.

Janata began a new journey at the end of 2012 when fresh capital was injected into it after the bank had gone in the red by Tk 1,628 crore and faced a capital shortfall of Tk 2,011 crore.

In a span of one year, it posted a profit of Tk 955 crore at the end of December, 2013 -- a trend that continued for the next six years. It clocked up Tk 268 crore in profit the last time in 2017. All these years, Janata maintained the required capital.

But Janata's downfall began in January this year. It incurred a huge loss of Tk 1,600 crore in the first six

months of this year alone.

Former BB governor Salehuddin Ahmed blames a lack of good governance and inaction against defaulters for Janata's sorry state now, once again after 2012.

"Instead of punishing the defaulters, the government is incentivising them."

Salehuddin feels the central bank, where he was at the helm once, is helpless, but it could still go after the defaulters and those responsible for irregularities.

"If large banks become weak one after another, it will affect the country's whole economy," he added.

Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, who once served as deputy governor at the BB, raises a new concern -- weakness of the regulatory body.

Irregularities have been going on undetected at Janata for the last eight or so years, and some of the cases are being revealed now, he pointed out.

"It is a concern for the banking sector that the Bangladesh Bank took so long to identify the irregularities ...," he said, suggesting a special audit on

Janata to find out undetected incidents of corruption.

But for now, much of Janata's ailments come from two large borrowers -- AnonTex and Crescent, both of which defaulted on loans in June this year. They now hold 73 percent (Tk 8,300 crore) of the total large loans from Janata.

The way these two groups were given loans against non-repatriated export bills is unprecedented. The Daily Star had earlier reported on their innovative scams.

Janata purchased unverified export bills of Crescent amounting to Tk 765 crore. The companies to which Crescent exported are shady and non-existent at their addresses. Janata did not comply with any of the rules in buying such export bills the proceeds of which were not repatriated.

The BB found complicity of Janata's top management, including its managing director, in the scam.

In case of AnonTex, loans were given violating the credit rules and norms.

Though the company failed to repay its previous loans, Janata forked out more and more money for it.

Anomalies regarding other big borrowers too are rife.

Janata was fined Tk 10 lakh by the BB in May this year for violation of foreign exchange transaction rules. Its offence was to provide LC (Letter of Credit) facilities continuously to Beximco Group though the company didn't submit bills of entry -- the document to prove that the goods actually entered the country.

The central bank cancelled the dealer licence of Janata's Imanganj branch in June this year for massive irregularities in foreign exchange transactions.

The BB detected serious irregularities in foreign exchange transactions at Janata's Kemal Ataturk Avenue branch last year. The branch purchased fake export bills involving Tk 54 crore from four companies.

All this point to one thing -- Janata is in great danger of financial mismanagement and corruption.

BASIC Bank's downfall started with a scam of Tk 4,500 crore, while Sonali Bank came under the spotlight with the Hallmark scam of Tk 3,500 crore that put the bank in capital shock. Sonali is still suffering the consequences of the scam, as it faced a capital shortage of Tk 6,600 crore in June.

And now Janata is following suit.

ACC sends

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identity card and passport.

Earlier on May 13, 2015, the ACC had issued similar notices to Latifur, his brother Saifur Rahman and Bangla daily Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman requesting them to give their statement.

After carrying out long investigations, the ACC on August 2 that year sent letters to them saying that the allegations were not proved and the commission resolved those through recording the complaints.