

Kalapara, new destination of Yaba

The narcotic from Myanmar is brought by trawlers in the Bay

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

A section of Yaba smugglers are using 'safer and less costly' waterways to bring the illegal drug from Cox's Bazar or Myanmar to Kalapara in the district, said public representatives and local elites at a recent upazila development committee meeting.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized about 6.77 lakh Yaba tablets from Kalapara bridge area on October 6.

On August 8, police arrested one Shakil, 22, with 445 pieces of Yaba from Khajura area near Kuakata sea beach.

On August 3, police arrested Runa Begum, 37, with 400 pieces of Yaba from Kalapara upazila town.

Earlier on July 12, police arrested a woman named Achia Begum, 28, and seized 2,000 Yaba tablets from her possession in

Mohipur area.

Smugglers use nameless trawlers to carry Yaba from Teknaf or Myanmar or Ukhia to Kalapara, Ansar Uddin Mollah, chairman of Latachalee Union Parishad (UP), said at the upazila development committee's meeting on October 8.

He also named two alleged Yaba smugglers of Mohipur area and urged law enforcers to arrest them to get more information about people involved in the crime.

Reaz Uddin Talukder, chairman of Dhankhali UP, mentioned the name of another alleged Yaba trader in the area.

Kalapara municipality Mayor Bipul Kumar Hawlader suspected that some Rohingya people might be involved in the matter.

Talking with this correspondent, Md Motaleb Talukder, Kalapara upazila

parishad chairman, said, "Seizure of huge quantities of Yaba from Kalapara town indicates that the narcotic is being brought in the area from Myanmar or Cox's Bazar to Kalapara through waterways. We have already discussed the matter in the meetings of upazila law and order committee and upazila development committee to take lawful measures and find ways to prevent Yaba trade."

"We asked all UP chairmen and members and village police to inform us or police if any people, especially strangers, are found moving suspiciously in the area," he added.

Md Mahfuzur Rahman, additional superintendent of police of Patuakhali, said, "Following recent seizure of huge Yaba here, we asked the officers in charge (OC) of Kalapara, Galachipa, Rangabali and Mohipur police stations

to arrange increased watch on water transports including trawlers and cargo boats to prevent bringing of illegal drugs from Myanmar, Ukhia or Cox's Bazar by waterways.

Md Monirul Islam, OC of Kalapara Police Station, said they are now extra careful over the matter as huge quantities of Yaba was seized and two alleged traders were arrested by law enforcers.

Major Md Masud Rana, company commander of Rab-8 Patuakhali camp, said they have increased patrol on waterways in the area to identify and nab Yaba smugglers.

"We can't search all trawlers or cargo boats round the clock on different routes in a large area due to lack of manpower and logistics but we take prompt action whenever we have information," he said.

Woman shot dead by husband

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A housewife, who was shot alleged by her husband in Cox's Bazar over a family feud on Friday, died at a private clinic in the town early yesterday.

The deceased, Rozina Akter, 28, wife of Mohammad Shafi, had been residing with her only daughter at a rented house at Halimaghona in Pahartoli area.

Rozina's father Md Shafi said his daughter married Shafi about seven years ago without the consent of her family members.

A year after their marriage, her husband married another woman, which created marital discord between them and, at one stage, they got divorced about two years ago.

Recently the duo came in contact with each other yet again and got married for a second time.

Following an altercation on Thursday night, Shafi shot Rozina several times and fled the scene.

Critically injured Rozina was first taken to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital and later shifted to a private clinic in the town where she succumbed to her injuries while undergoing treatment.



A wing wall and approach road of a bridge over the Kharuvaj river at Nekirhat village in Taraganj upazila of Rangpur collapsed during the last rainy season.

PHOTO: STAR

APPROACH ROAD OF BRIDGE COLLAPSES

No vehicular movement for five months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Movement of vehicles across a bridge over the Kharuvaj river at Nekirhat village has remained stopped for the last five months as a wing wall and approach road collapsed due to strong current in June this year.

Around 30,000 people of 15 villages in Taraganj upazila of Rangpur are facing immense problems as Saidpur-Nekirhat road is the only way for them to go to Rangpur city in the shortest possible time.

Locals said Saidpur Division of Water Development Board (WDB) in the district built the bridge at Nekirhat village in the upazila.

WDB authorities said they had recently handed it over to Rangpur Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) when Taraganj upazila LGED expressed its ignorance about the matter.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent saw that a portion of the approach road on the west side of the bridge collapsed due to strong current in the river during the last rainy season.

It was also found that cracks have developed on the pillars, making the bridge shake when vehicles pass on the nearby Dhaka-Dinajpur road and causing panic among the people, who cross the bridge on foot with great difficulty.

Member of Harial Kuti Union Parishad (UP) ward No-7 Nazrul Islam said Saidpur WDB constructed the 60-foot-long and 6-foot-wide bridge at a cost of around Tk one crore in 1993, but no repair

work was done since then.

"People living in villages on the west side of the bridge seldom come to the market at the other end as they are afraid to cross the bridge, as a result, our business is greatly hampered," said Mahbubur Rahman, a trader in Nekirhat bazar.

"We face difficulties while going to Rangpur town or catching Dhaka-bound buses as mechanised vehicles cannot cross the bridge. Now we have to go to Taraganj bus stand, which costs more time and money," said Shariful Islam of Dangir hat village.

Ayub master, Abul Hossain and many other affected people said they submitted several petitions to the local UP chairman and upazila chairman, but no steps have been taken till now.

"I contacted the WDB authorities in the divisional office about the problem, but they are yet to take any initiative to address it," said Taraganj Upazila Chairman Anisur Rahman.

"I have visited the spot, but we have nothing to do as LGED in Rangpur is now responsible for looking after it," said Saidpur Divisional WDB Executive Engineer Krishna Komol Chandra Sarker.

Taraganj Upazila LGED Engineer Ahmed Hyder Jaman differed with the WDB executive engineer's claim. "The road on which the bridge is situated belongs to us, but the bridge is not ours as WDB owns Kharuvaj river. However, we are planning to build a new bridge there to ease people's sufferings," he added.

23 injured in AL infighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

At least 23 people were injured in a clash between two factions of Awami League (AL) in Purbo Hashamdia area under Bhanga upazila yesterday.

Five houses and a shop were also damaged during the incident.

Of the injured, nine were taken to Faridpur Medical College Hospital and Bhanga Upazila Health Complex while the rest given first aid.

Locals said there was a longstanding conflict between Jahangir Matabbar, vice president of the upazila unit AL, and councillor of Bhanga municipality Bazlu Matabbar, also an activist of local AL, over establishing supremacy in the locality.

The two groups locked in an altercation when the supporters of Jahangir Matabbar went to build a shop at a fish market in Purbo Hashamdia area.

At one stage, the rival groups attacked each other with lethal weapons, leaving 23 people from both sides injured.

Kazi Saidur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Bhanga Police Station, said additional police personnel have been deployed in the area to avert any further trouble.

Tourists suffer as no bus terminal in Kuakata

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Movement of tourists going to Kuakata beach is severely hampered as many vehicles are parked on the only road due to lack of a bus terminal in the municipality.

The government declared Kuakata as a municipality in 2010, but the authorities have not been able to set up a bus terminal in eight years.

Several thousand tourists from home and abroad visit Kuakata sea beach every year to enjoy its natural scenery and to see the sun rise and set from the beach.

There are many eye-soothing spots like the long beach, tamarisk garden, eco-park, fatrarbon (mangrove forest), statue of Goutam Buddha at Misreepara temple, Gongamoti reserve forest, Kawer Char where red crabs can be seen, and Rakhine villages where Rakhine people make handicrafts for sale.

They can also see the historical Kua, an ancient wooden boat that was used by Myanmar about 200 years back.

Tourists visit the beach round the year, but the most of them go there mainly in the tourism season from November to April. During winter vacation, students from different schools, colleges and universities across the country go there on study tours and picnics.

This correspondent recently visited Kuakata and saw about 100 buses, mini-buses, jeeps, private cars and micro-buses from different places of the country parked on the only road as there is no terminal.

"I often come to Kuakata to enjoy its natural scenery, but I have to face trouble parking my car as the only road is blocked by other vehicles. The authorities should take immediate steps to set up a bus terminal here, considering the tourists' interest," said Atiqur Rahman, a tourist from Dhaka.

Kuakata municipality Mayor Abdul Bareq Mollah said they have prepared a plan to set up a bus terminal. "We will start construction of the terminal after acquiring land," he said.



Parked buses take up half of the road near Kuakata beach, hampering movement of tourists. PHOTO: STAR

BNP leader Tariqul Islam

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October 12. He died there at 5:05pm. The former minister left behind his wife Nargis Islam, two sons and a host of relatives, friends and political followers to mourn his death.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir expressed deep shock at the death of Tariqul and extended sympathy to the bereaved family. He also prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Leaders of the BNP national standing committee and the newly formed political alliance Jatiya Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain also expressed their deep shock at the death of the progressive political leader.

The BNP observes a mourning day today by hoisting black flags at its offices across the country. The party leaders and activists will wear black badges.

The first namaz-e-janaza of the deceased would be held in front of the party's Naya Paltan headquarters at 10:00am and the second janaza at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban at 11:15am, said Sayrul Kabir Khan, a staff member of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's media wing.

The deceased would be flown to Jashore and buried at the Karbala Graveyard after namaz-e-janaza following asr prayers at Jashore Eidgah Maidan today, he told The

Daily Star.

Tariqul Islam, born on November 16, 1946 in Jashore, did his BA (economics) from Jessore Michael Madhusudan College and MA in economics from Rajshahi University in 1969. He was engaged in leftist politics during his student life and faced jail sentences during the Pakistan regime.

He joined National Awami Party of Mawlana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani and took part in the Liberation War in 1971. Later, he joined Jatiyatabadi Gonotantrik Dal. He joined BNP in 1978 during its founder Ziaur Rahman's rule. He held the positions of joint secretary general, acting secretary general and vice-chairman of the party.

Known as a progressive political leader, Tariqul was the first elected chairman of Jashore Municipality and was elected MP for four times from the district.

Since 1982, Tariqul served as state minister and minister for the ministries of roads and railways, social welfare and women affairs, post and telecommunications, food, information, and forest and environment.

Tariqul had long been inactive in politics due to his illness. He last attended the standing committee meeting in February this year before Khaleda was sent to jail in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

New dinosaur

FROM PAGE 16

"We found most of the cranial bones: the snout, the jaws, a lot of teeth, also the bones that define the eye sockets for example and, in that way, we were able to create an almost complete reconstruction," Jose Luis Carballido, a researcher at the Egidio Feruglio museum told Agence France-Presse.

"Not only is this the discovery of a new species in an area where you wouldn't expect to find fossils, but the skull is almost complete." Researchers who took part in the project from Zaragoza University and the National University of La Matanza said the group of dinosaurs likely moved around as a group and would have died together.

The discovery came as a huge surprise to palaeontologists, who believe the area where the remains were found would have been a desert with scarce supply of water and limited sources of food for herbivores.

"While one can imagine that this group of sauropods could have adapted to move in more arid environments, with little vegetation, little humidity and little water, it's an area in which you wouldn't be looking for fossils," Dr Carballido added.

Known for their enormous size, sauropods include some of the largest animals to have ever walked the planet.

Many species within the group weighed around 40 tonnes, while Argentinosaurus, thought to be the heaviest sauropod, likely weighed in excess of 80 tonnes.

3 Hindu families get back khas land

Police rescued them from land grabbers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Three landless Hindu families, ousted from the government khas land allocated for them at Baraipara village of Tongbhanga union in the district's Hatibandha upazila on Saturday, got back the shelter yesterday morning, thanks to the prompt action by police and local union parishad (UP).

Some people allegedly led by Shahidul Islam drove out families of Sharat Chandra Roy, Bhupendranath Roy and Amol Chandra Barmon of the village after damaging their house on Saturday noon.

The poor families are dependent on physical labour for their livelihood. "The three landless Hindu families were rehabilitated on seven decimals of government khas land three weeks ago, but they were ousted from there by land grabbers. Police and union parishad helped the landless families to get it back again," said Atiar Rahman, chairman of Tongbhanga UP.

One of the victims of the land grabbers' attack, Sharat Chandra Roy said, "A group of 10 to 12 people led by Shahidul Islam ousted us from the khas land as they wanted to occupy the land. We informed police and they helped us immediately."

Contacted, Shahidul Islam said, "The government khas land is beside my own land and so, I am entitled to use it. But without informing me, some landless families were rehabilitated here."

Hatibandha Police Station Officer in Charge Omar Farooque said, "We assured security to the landless Hindu families. Police will take strict action if there is further attempt to oust the poor families from the khas land."

Boy gets 10 yrs for killing classmate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A court in Gopalganj yesterday jailed a schoolboy for ten years for killing his classmate in 2017.

Judge Md Kabir Uddin of Juvenile Court delivered the verdict. The court acquitted Sajib Sikder.

The convict is Shah Alam Sikder, 14, son of Md Badsha Sikder of Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj.

He is a student of Class VII and Barkatullah Prince was his classmate at Ramdia Shree Shosi Komal Bidyapith.

The court ordered Shah Alam to be kept in Jashore Child Development Centre for 10 years.

According to the prosecution, Shah Alam stabbed to death Prince, 13, son of Hanif Mollah, at their coaching centre on September 12 in 2017.