



Due to scanty water flow from the upstream and acute navigability crisis, most of the waterways along the Jamuna river basin areas already dried up, disrupting plying of boats and movement of passengers. Inset, many cross the dried up riverbed on foot every day. The photos were taken from Gaibandha's Fulchhari upazila a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

Communication hampered in dried Jamuna

Sandy land emerges in most of the areas of the mighty river as water level sees drastic fall

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Communications along the waterways in the Jamuna river basin routes, especially in the winter season, virtually remain suspended, as the river usually loses its navigability due to a poor water flow from the upstream.

As many as 35 large and small river ports, locally called ghats, have remained inactive at different points along the Jamuna basin due to deposition of huge sand in the riverbed and development of shoals.

According to Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), over 400 kilometre waterways in the region are facing serious threat while a number of river routes are already closed as

those turned into a tiny canal at many points.

Sources at Gaibandha Zila Parishad, who usually leased the ghats, plying of goods-laden and passenger boats along the river routes in Sundarganj, Fulchhari and Saghata upazilas of Gaibandha, Chilmari, Raumar, Rajibpur in Kurigram, Sariakandi, Sonatola in Bogura and Dewanganj and Islampur upazilas in Jamalpur are now on the verge of closing down due to acute navigability crisis.

Earlier, thousands of people in those areas used to travel to different destinations using engine-boats everyday.

Although it takes a reasonable time to carry goods or passengers to their destinations in the rainy season, it consumes more time in dry season.

Besides, cargo and passenger boats have to travel a long way in search of navigable branches of the river, which consumes more time and fuel.

Meanwhile, movement of country boats in different routes have been seriously hampered this year as the river dried up a bit earlier than that of the previous years.

As a result, shoal people as well as other passengers are forced to cross the sandy way on foot to go to their destinations.

"I have been plying country boat to and from Balashi ghat and Bahadurabad ghat for the last seven years. But due to a drastic fall in water level in the last three years, I need five to six hours to reach one ghat to another now, while it takes only two hours in the rainy season," said Jamal Uddin, a

boatman at Balashi ghat.

As passengers have to travel on foot to reach the ferry ghat, locals erected a bamboo bridge across a deep portion of the river on the way, Jamal said.

Besides, the main stream of the Jamuna river had to be shifted to one and half a kilometres from the western bank due to poor water flow and deposition of sands in the riverbed, he added.

Due to the dried up waterways, local farmers have to suffer most while carrying their agriculture products to different markets, Fazlupur Union Parishad Chairman Abu Hanif Pramanik said.

Abdul Awal, BIWTA site engineer at Balashi ghat, said right now they are conducting the earth filling work and hope to complete the dredging of the river by December this year.

SHOP OWNER'S CRUELTY
Teenager lands in hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

A 13-year-old boy, who was tortured allegedly by his shop owner in Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila on Wednesday night, is now undergoing treatment at Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex.

The victim, Rocky Deb, son of Maloy Deb of Chandura village in the upazila, used to work at a jewellery shop named Joy Ma Kali Shilpaloy, owned by Sourav Banik, for the last one year.

Victim's father Maloy alleged that shop owner Sourav beat his son mercilessly with a bamboo stick for not following his direction.

Rocky, who had been suffering from fever since Wednesday midnight, had several injury marks on different parts of his body, Maloy alleged.

"Seeing his physical condition we admitted him to Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex," Maloy said.

Madhabpur municipality Councillor Ajit Paul said no one dares to say anything against Sourav as he is an influential person in the locality.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach Sourav over phone for his comment in this regard.

Officer in Charge of Madhabpur Police Station Chanda Kumar Chakraborty said although none had lodged any complaint in this regard, they will look into the matter seriously.

Soil collapse kills 2 kids

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushtia

Two children died and another sustained injuries as a heap of soil collapsed on them while they were playing at Gordah village of Mirpur upazila yesterday.

The dead were Akash Ahmed, 12, son of Montu Mondol; and Toriqul Islam, 11, son of Hasem Ali Mondol of the village.

The injured is Likhon Ali, 10, son of Nasir Uddin of the same village.

The three children were playing beside a pile of soil, kept for sale by a brick kiln owner when a large section of the pile slid down on the boys around 3:00pm, Abdul Aziz, OC of Mirpur Police Station, quoted locals as saying.

Locals rescued the three boys in unconscious state after digging for about half an hour.

After they were taken to Mirpur Upazila Health Complex doctors declared two of them dead, Abdul Aziz added.

HABIGANJ SADAR HOSPITAL List of 28 brokers made to stop malpractice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The authorities of Habiganj Sadar Hospital yesterday published a list of 28 'brokers' involved in hoodwinking patients and their relatives and handed it over to the authorities concerned for taking action and creating public awareness regarding the nuisance.

Earlier on November 4 last year, a meeting of Habiganj Sadar Hospital Management Committee decided to form a sub-committee to find ways to free the hospital from brokers who had made the patients virtually hostage.

Habiganj Sadar Hospital is considered very important for the treatment of more than 20 lakh people in the district.

But the treatment seekers, especially those from the countryside, faced various problems as the syndicate of brokers created obstacle to the treatment to serve the interest of different private clinics in the town, said stakeholders.

There are even allegations that a few patients died due to delayed or wrong treatment amid interference by the syndicate.

Earlier the powerful syndicate foiled the hospital authorities' attempt to take action against them.

"Lastly, 'Dalal Nirmul Sub-Committee' was formed to resolve the matter," said committee convener Mithun Roy, resident medical officer of Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

The list has been sent to Habiganj civil surgeon, hospital superintendent, superintendent of police and Habiganj Model Police Station, he said.

Habiganj Sadar Hospital Superintendent Dr Rathindra Chandra Deb said the committee published the list of 28 brokers and sent it to law enforcement agencies yesterday so that legal action can be taken.

Pabna Jubo League man hacked dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Jubo League man was hacked dead in Pabna Sadar upazila yesterday.

The victim was Khairul Islam, 40, hailing from Char Shibampur village in the upazila.

Obaidul Haque, officer-in-charge (OC) of Pabna Sadar Police Station, said Khairul had rivalry with a group led by Sumon over supremacy in the area.

A gang of criminals stabbed Khairul in the village, injuring him critically, the OC said, adding that he died on way to Pabna Medical College Hospital. Additional police have been deployed in the area.

Police sent the body to the hospital for autopsy.

"Police are investigating the incident and trying to arrest the killers," OC Obaidul also said.



Two of the injured at Pirojpur Sadar Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Clash over land leaves freedom fighter, 14 others injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

At least 15 people including a freedom fighter were injured in a clash between two feuding groups over land dispute in Indurkani upazila of the district yesterday.

The injured were admitted to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital and Morrelganj Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat.

Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Indurkani Police Station, said soon after being informed, they visited the scene and detained three individuals on suspicion of being

involved in the clash.

Necessary action will be taken once any victim files a case in this connection, he added.

One of the injured, freedom fighter Motaleb Choukider, said early yesterday morning, near about 40 people led by Latif Choukider, a neighbour of his, arrived at 31 decimals of his paternal land, in an attempt to take its possession by force.

Latif's men launched an attack on him and his relatives with sharp weapons and sticks and torched a stack of straw as the latter protested the move. The attack left

nine of his relatives including a woman injured, claimed Motaleb.

Although the matter has already been solved at the court, "Latif has been claiming the possession of my land for the past two years," he also claimed.

Latif, however, told local journalists that his neighbour, Motaleb, had been forcibly occupying a piece of land that he (Latif) had purchased.

"After I went to build a house on my land yesterday, he [Motaleb] along with his men attacked my men and injured seven people," he added.



Freedom fighters accompanied by a large number of locals form a human chain near Smriti Amlan in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of those who brutally tortured Shamsul Haq, upazila unit commander of Mukti Joddha Sangsad, on February 2. The attackers allegedly led by a local Awami League leader broke the chest bone of the freedom fighter as he went to protest occupation of his land at Babur Haat in the upazila town. Inset, Shamsul Haq at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

PHOTO: STAR

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