



The local administration on Monday freed Kaicha Beel, a government-owned waterbody in Jagannathbari Mouja of Tangail's Gopalpur upazila, from an illegal occupier. Inset, fish netted from the waterbody is taken to the premises of Nagda Shimla union parishad for distribution among orphans.

PHOTO: STAR

FERRY SERVICE DISRUPTION 200 vehicles stranded on both sides of Padma

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

More than 200 vehicles especially goods-laden trucks remained stranded for the third consecutive day yesterday at Shimulia-Kathalbari terminals due to severe disruption in ferry services caused by poor navigability in a stretch of the Padma.

Officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) said the situation would not get any better before Friday.

The authority suspended ferry services in the terminals from 2:00pm on Sunday as silt deposited in the ferry channels and dropped the water level causing the poor navigability.

Abdul Alim, manager of Shimulia Ghat, said the water was only five feet deep in the channels while it must be at least seven feet deep for proper ferry operation.

He said though the operation was suspended on Sunday, the disruption had been going on since August.

The authority had been trying to dredge the channels to increase water level but struggling due to strong current, he added.

Officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) informed that all 17 ferries, operate normally on Shimulia-Kathalbari route, were anchored on the banks. They arranged three small ferries to carry ambulances for emergency situations.

Meanwhile, several hundred good-laden vehicles remained stuck for days in the terminals.

Traffic Inspector Md Helal Uddin of Shimulia Ghat traffic police said at least 200 trucks were waiting to cross the river since last week.

Drivers and helpers of these vehicles were passing days in misery as there was no hotel and shop near the terminals as illegal shops were recently evicted from the spot, locals said.

Sabuj Miah, a truck driver at Shimulia Ghat, said he was heading Jessore but got stranded as ferry operation stopped.

"I have been sleeping in the truck for last three days with nothing to eat. I don't know how would I survive till Friday," said Sabuj.

A driver of Hamim Paribahan Anu Mollah said he came with passengers from Dhaka. As they got stuck in the terminal, all the passengers got down from the vehicle and left.

Woman found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Unidentified criminals stabbed a housewife to death at her house in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Jhorna Mondal, 42, wife of Dulal Mondal of Pashchim Gangabordi village, was mother two children.

Locals said the incident occurred yesterday afternoon when Dulal, a mason, and his children were not present at home.

Villagers, spotted Jhorna's body around 2:30pm and informed the police, who recovered the body and sent it to Faridpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Sub Inspector (SI) of Sadar Police Station Belal Hossain said victim's body bore several marks of stab injuries on the head, neck and back.

They were trying to find the motive behind the murder and arrest the killers, the SI said.

Bangladesh to clock third highest

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At the same time, the country has been improving the living standards of its population, he said, adding that political and policy challenges, however, remained.

Growth is expected to slow down to 7.4 percent in 2020 and 7.3 percent in 2024, said the report.

But this year, Bangladesh's GDP growth will tie with Rwanda's and will be bested only by Dominica and South Sudan, which are projected to grow at 9.4 percent and 7.9 percent respectively.

The IMF projected that Bangladesh will see less inflationary pressure this year. Inflation will be 5.5 percent this year, compared to last year's 5.6 percent.

It also highlighted that the current account deficit has been rising in the last two consecutive years. The negative balance was 2.1 percent of GDP in 2017 and 2.8 percent in 2018. In 2019, the negative balance will narrow to 2 percent of the GDP.

Meanwhile, neighbouring

India's economy will grow at 6.1 percent, a downgrade from the IMF's April projection of 7.3 percent. Among the other South Asian economies, Bhutan will grow at 5.5 percent, the Maldives 6.5 percent, Nepal 7.1 percent, Sri Lanka 2.7 percent and Pakistan 3.3 percent this year.

The global economy is in a synchronised slowdown, with growth for 2019 downgraded to 3 percent from the IMF's April prediction of 3.3 percent -- the slowest pace since the global financial crisis.

The report said, "This subdued growth is a consequence of rising trade barriers; elevated uncertainty surrounding trade and geopolitics; idiosyncratic factors causing macroeconomic strain in several emerging market economies; and structural factors, such as low productivity growth and aging demographics in advanced economies."

And yet, economies of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Dominica and South Sudan are projected to grow at 7 percent or more this calendar year."

The report further added that "growth in low-income developing countries remains robust, though growth performance is more heterogeneous within this group. Robust growth is expected for non-commodity exporters, such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, while the performance of commodity exporters, such as Nigeria, is projected to remain lacklustre."

"Downside risks to the outlook are elevated. Trade barriers and heightened geopolitical tensions, including Brexit-related risks, could further disrupt supply chains and hamper confidence, investment and growth."

Global growth in 2020 is projected to improve modestly to 3.4 percent, a downward revision of 0.2 percent from the IMF's April projections.

Unlike the synchronised slowdown, however, this recovery is not broad-based and is precarious.

No classes, exams until killers are expelled

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department and a spokesperson for the protesters.

"We will be watching whether the Buet authorities are implementing our demands," he added.

Sayem also said they would organise a mass oath-taking ceremony today to resist terrorism and communal forces on the campus.

Buet teachers and students will participate in the oath-taking, and the field-level protests will be called off at the programme, he said.

"The general students will not take part in any academic activities until the Buet authorities expel the accused on the basis of the charge sheet submitted by the law enforcers," he added.

"We do not want to share the same academic culture with the killers."

ONE MORE CONFESSED TO KILLING

Buet student Moniruzzaman Monir, an accused in Abrar Fahad murder case, yesterday

confessed before a magistrate that he and several others hit Abrar with cricket stumps.

In his statement, Moniruzzaman said he and some others took Abrar to Room No 2011 of the Sher-e-Bangla Hall where he struck Abrar four to five times with a stump, investigators and court sources said.

He also said several others, including Anik Sarkar, the information and research secretary of Buet BCL, hit Abrar the most, which led to his death.

After recording Moniruzzaman's statement, Metropolitan Magistrate Sarafuzzaman Ansary sent him to jail.

Earlier, five leaders of Buet BCL made confessional statements admitting their involvement in Abrar

murder.

In another development, detectives arrested ASM Nazmus Sadat, an accused in the murder case, in Dinajpur early yesterday, while he was trying to flee to India.

With Nazmus's arrest, so far 20 people have been arrested in connection with the murder. He is a batch-17 student of Buet's mechanical engineering department.

Meanwhile, the same court yesterday placed Shamsul Arefin Rafath, another accused, on a fresh four-day remand after he was produced before the court on completion of his five-day remand.

The court also ordered to send Akash Hossain, an accused, to jail after his five-day remand.

The grisly murder took place between 7:30pm on October 6 and 2:30am on October 7. The incident sparked protests on university campuses across the country.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, while talking to journalists at the secretariat yesterday, urged Buet students, who are protesting Abrar's brutal murder, to go back to the class as the prime minister has

quoted a statement issued by Inspector General of Prisons Brigadier General AKM Mustafa Kamal Pasha.

The media reports that earlier said Anik was beaten in jail were false, the statement said.

Govt waterbody recovered from illegal occupier

Former president of Nagda Shimla union unit AL occupied a portion of Kaicha Beel and cultivated fish

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Gopalpur upazila administration on Monday recovered a government owned waterbody from illegal occupation by a local Awami League (AL) leader.

Abul Hossain, former president of Nagda Shimla union unit of AL, occupied a six-acre area of Kaicha Beel, a waterbody in Jagannathbari Mouja of Gopalpur, several years ago and continued fish cultivation there, upazila administration sources said.

To take control of the waterbody, the upazila administration demarcated it with red flags six months ago, they said.

Officials also directed Abul Hossain to catch and take away all his fish from the waterbody by one month and not to cultivate fish there further but the latter ignored the directive.

Following instructions from the district administration, Gopalpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Bikash Biswas and Assistant Commissioner (Land) Reza Masum

Prodhan along with a police team went to the spot on Monday.

They arranged netting of the fish of the waterbody by local fishermen and brought the fish to the local union parishad (UP) premises by a truck.

They handed over the fish to the authorities of all the 19 orphanages in the upazila and suggested arranging feast for the orphans with the fish, officials said.

Besides upazila officials, M. Hossain Ali, chairman of Nagda Shimla UP, Zoynal Abedin, president of Gopalpur Press Club, were present during the fish distribution.

Bulbul Miah, a resident of Mazidpur Orphanage, said they got about 60 kg of different fish including carps and pangas.

UNO Bikash Biswas said, "We have taken control of the government owned waterbody that remained under illegal occupation for years. The netted fish was distributed among the local orphans following rules."