



The serenity of Sylhet's Dhalai river is disturbed by small boats like this. Though it may appear like an innocent scene, what's actually going on is that this boat is carrying illegally lifted sand from the river. Every year during monsoon, the river and its adjacent areas suffer from erosion due to this kind of activity. This photo was taken recently from Companyganj's Bholaganj area.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

The boys are back home!
3 Naogaon teens lost their way into India, rescued after calling 999

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three teenage boys, who lost their way home and mistakenly crossed over into India through Naogaon border on Monday, were rescued following a call made to 999 after Indian Border Security Force (BSF) detained them.

One of the boys, identifying himself as an eighth grader, called the national emergency helpline and said they were detained by BSF after they crossed the border mistakenly.

"We communicated with local police and BGB men after the boys sought help," said Inspector Anwar Sattar, focal person (media) of the National Emergency Service -- 999.

The BGB men then communicated with their Indian counterpart and brought the boys back home following a flag meeting between the two forces, he said.

The three students are: Rabiul Islam (15), Rabiul Alam (14), and Badsha (19). All of them are from Dhamoirhat upazila in the district.

They were later handed over to their family members, Anwar said quoting members of Border Guard Bangladesh.

Where putrid stench greets patients

Dumpster in front of Khulna General Hospital suffocates local life

DIPANKAR ROY

Imagine a dumpster sitting right opposite the main gate of a hospital, spreading a ghastly stench. Those who dump waste here don't even bother to make sure their trash is placed at the bin, which means

everything from household waste, hospital garbage, drug waste and roadside trash are dumped, comfortably sits just before the main gate of the 250-bed General Hospital near Khulna city's KCC market.

Visiting the spot on Saturday, this correspondent saw the huge, iron-made

During this correspondent's visit, at least 10 patients with severe illnesses were seen waiting on easy bikes adjacent to the dumpster as well.

Surprisingly, the bin is also only 400 feet away from the deputy commissioner's (DC) office. Another office just opposite the bin belongs to the Khulna police superintendent.

Gobinda Bar, a patient's relative from Jashore's Monirampur upazila, said, "If such conditions persist, patients will be more prone to diseases instead of being cured."

Pedestrian Akhi Akhter, a frequent commuter of the road, said the stench is not just limited to the hospital area, but extends to several nearby offices and residences.

Although at least three doctors and two staffers of the hospital told this correspondent that the conservancy department of KCC collect waste from the bin almost every day, they also said it gets filled up in no time. Demanding that the dumpster be removed outright, they said if it has to be here, the waste should be collected every three-four hours.

Anwarul Kadir, educationalist and member of Transparency International Bangladesh, Khulna, said they had requested KCC authorities to shift the bin to another place several times, but to no avail.

Echoing the same, Niaz Mohammed, civil surgeon of Khulna, said it's hard to believe a dustbin is placed right at the entrance of a hospital.

Contacted, Md Abdul Aziz, chief conservancy officer of KCC, said, "In the past, we didn't have other options to place it. However, we are working on finding a suitable place now and wish to relocate it immediately."



As if a dumpster right next to a hospital's entrance wasn't enough, there's another few feet of waste lying around it, which renders the spot almost un navigable, while the stench makes the area's air suffocating.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

there's at least a few feet of waste around the dumpster. Even though the bin has remained at such a sensitive spot for years, no steps have been taken to remove it.

If common sense prevailed, such a scenario would never exist in reality. However, such a dumpster, where

dumpster forcing patients and their attendants to cross the area by covering their faces. What it makes it worse is that the spot near the waiting area for the hospital's Covid-19 unit, where hundreds of people come everyday to get tested or vaccinated.

Five decades of glory and gloom

JU turns 51

JU CORRESPONDENT

Jahangirnagar University has turned fifty-one. The university started its journey back in 1971 as Jahangirnagar Muslim University. Fast-forward to today, it has come to be one of the most prominent cultural hubs of the country.

This residential university at Savar now has 36 departments, six faculties and four institutes, accommodating 15,000 students and about 500 academics devoted to teaching and research, said officials.

The university has also become a symbol of resistance against injustice, with its students leading several movements, the most prominent and well-documented one being the anti-rape movement of 1999.

However, even after five decades, students still find themselves dealing with accommodation crises, subpar quality of food, lack of study materials, laboratories and research facilities, they said.

"It is unfortunate that JU still does not offer subjects like EEE, ME or other applied sciences. Students should be allowed to keep up with the fast-paced world," a student of the statistics department told this correspondent, wishing anonymity.

Jahangirnagar University also has no Emeritus professor, while no honorary doctorate degree has been given to anyone in 51 years, said ABM



Azizur Rahman, deputy registrar of higher education and scholarship.

Asked, Prof Dr Laek Sazzad Andallah, president of the university's teachers' association and a syndicate member, said, "We had many scholars who could have been offered an emeritus professorship. I don't know why that didn't happen."

The university has held only five convocations in 51 years, confirmed the university's public relations officer.

In 1997, JU held its first convocation, after 26 years of its establishment. Every year, approximately Tk 2 crore is allocated for convocation, said sources.

Moreover, no "Dean's Award" has been introduced. Toppers of the campus expressed their dissatisfaction over the matter.

In 2019, there was a discussion regarding introducing the award at a syndicate meeting, which later got cancelled amid the pandemic, informed a faculty dean.

"Every year, a fixed budget is allocated for the award, which goes unutilised," the dean told The Daily Star.

Contacted, JU pro-Vice Chancellor (academic) Prof Md Nurul Alam, said, "We are thinking of inaugurating an engineering faculty. The chancellor will decide about the convocation."

This correspondent could not contact Vice Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam despite repeated attempts.

Despite all this, the 51st anniversary brings hope among the students, current and former, that the university will rise again from the ashes and retain its full glory.

Truckers' trouble at Kazirhat

Over 300 vehicles remain stranded on both sides of ghat due to ferry shortage

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Truck driver Babu Miah was on his way to Dhaka last Monday. With a truck full of vegetables, he was journeying from Pabna through Kazirhat-Aricha ferry ghat. This route made the most sense to him, as it saved distance and fuel cost.

But all his calculations were for naught. Coming to a standstill at the ferry ghat, he eventually returned to Pabna and started anew for the capital. He said he didn't have any time to wait around.

Babu reached Dhaka after travelling more than a hundred kilometres through the Bangabandhu Bridge. "It took me a day's travel to reach the destination," said Habibur Rahman got himself tangled in same predicament. With no way to turn back, he ended up staying at the ghat for six days before he could get to a ferry.

Due to lack of ferries, over 300 to 400 trucks stayed stranded there at a time over

the last month, sources said.

Only two small ferries are moving on the Kazirhaat-Aricha route, after ghat authorities did away with Ro-Ro ferries and its pontoon a month ago.

"The two ferries -- Kodom and Camelia -- can only move 50-60 trucks a day," said Mahabubur Rahman, ghat manager.

The ferries -- Begum Rokeya and Begum Sufia -- were taken to Mawa ghat after one of them got damaged a month ago, he said. But they're yet to be replaced.

"Due to lack of a Ro-Ro pontoon -- which was removed after being damaged last month -- we can't run big ferries. We have repeatedly requested BIWTA to repair the ghat and solve the crisis," said Khaled Newaz, DGM of Aricha ferry ghat.

Meanwhile, truck drivers complained there isn't enough food and sanitation facilities around the ghat. Asked, Newaz said they were trying to come up with a solution.



This is not a scene from a truck stand. For over a month, this has been the predicament of truckers who came to the Kazirhaat-Aricha ferry ghat. In the absence of bigger ferries and their pontoon, the ghat has virtually remained at a standstill, spelling misery for truckers who have to stay there for up to five-six days before boarding a ferry, all without adequate food or sanitation facilities.

PHOTO: STAR