



Passengers can finally breathe a sigh of relief as rail operation between Dhaka and Narayanganj is likely to resume early next month, with the new rail line between Kamalapur and Gendaria steadily inching towards completion.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## DHAKA-NARAYANGANJ ROUTE

# Rail operation likely to resume next week

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

Rail operation between Dhaka and Narayanganj is likely to resume early next month as laying of a new rail line between Kamalapur and Gendaria is almost complete.

Operation of trains on this route remained suspended for around five months to facilitate the work of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project (PBRPL).

“Work is almost done, except some signalling works, which will be completed within two or three days,” said Project Director Afzal Hossain.

“We have already requested GIBR (Government Inspector of Bangladesh Railway) to inspect the line. We hope that operation will resume in the next week,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

A BR official from Dhaka division, said their carriages and manpower are ready and they will be able to resume operation once the line is handed over to them.

Before the operation suspension on December 4 last year, BR had been operating nine pairs of trains – eight pairs of local trains and one Demu train – between Dhaka and Narayanganj daily.

PBRPL, the railway’s biggest project, is being implemented to build a 169-km rail line from Dhaka to Jashore through the Padma Bridge at a cost of Tk 39,247 crore.

Under the project, BR is constructing three dual gauge lines from Kamalapur to Gendaria. Of the three lines, one will be completed within two-three days.

Work of two other lines are ongoing and will take some more time to complete, Afzal said.

Gendaria is connected to Narayanganj with a single line and BR is implementing a separate project to build another line up to Narayanganj.

**We have already requested GIBR (Government Inspector of Bangladesh Railway) to inspect the line; and operation will resume following his recommendation. We hope that operation will resume in the next week.**

AFZAL HOSSAIN, Project Director

Passengers could reach Narayanganj from Dhaka within 45 minutes at a fare of only Tk 15. On the other hand, it takes almost an hour to reach Narayanganj by bus at a Tk 55 fare.

Many people from Narayanganj use trains to commute to and from Dhaka. The suspension of the operations for around five months caused them sufferings.

## ‘Harassment’ of headteacher by mayor protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The mayor of Phulbari upazila municipality and his assistant “verbally” abused the headteacher of Golam Mostafa Pilot High School on April 18 over an issue regarding the use of a schoolroom for distributing rice among the poor.

The incident led to a protest by students yesterday, who formed a human chain and held a rally demanding punishment for the mayor Mahmud Alam Liton and his cohort Shoyeb Pappu.

Contacted, the mayor and his aide denied the allegations.

Tozammel Hossain, the headteacher of the school, told The Daily Star that the mayor wanted to use a classroom for distributing rice among the poor under the VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) programme of the government.

But when he declined stating that classrooms were occupied for exams, the mayor and his aide verbally abused him, he added.

## Four held over killing of former UP chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Four people were arrested on Monday night in connection with the killing of a former union parishad (UP) member and his nephew, who were hacked to death in Jhalakathi’s Rajapur upazila the same night.

The deceased are Abdur Rab Howlader, 55, former UP member of ward-6 (Suktagar union), and his nephew Belayet Hossain, 45. Pulok Chandra Roy, officer-in-charge of Rajapur Police Station, said they arrested the four following a case filed by Howlader’s son Liakat Hossain with the police station.

The OC did not reveal the names of the arrestees.

“A case was filed accusing 15 named and 5-6 unnamed persons following the murder. Drives are underway to arrest them. We suspect the murder took place as a result of a longstanding feud between neighbours,” he added.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
APRIL 26

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:20	12:45	4:45	6:29	8:00
JAMAAT 4:55	1:15	5:00	6:34	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# Atrai held hostage to greed

The once-wide river has turned into a 30 feet canal, affecting lives of locals

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The Atrai river, which once flowed wide and strong through Santhia upazila in Pabna, is now barely recognisable.

Residents who used to swim and fish in the river during their childhood now find no sign of it near the Kashinathpur haat area, said Abul Hossain, an elderly local.

The river, which is 47 kilometres long and flows through three upazilas, has played a vital role in bringing a flow of water to Gaznar beel of Pabna’s Sujanagar upazila and setting a link with Jamuna river. However, it has lost its natural flow of water in the last four decades due to rampant encroachment.

According to Water Development Board (WDB), the minimum width of the river was 80 to 90 feet, and the maximum width was about 190 to 200 feet. However, the river has turned into a 30-foot canal now, as encroachers have occupied the rest.

Residents of the area blame a small culvert that was established near the Kashinathpur haat three to four decades ago for halting the flow of water. Since then, encroachers have started establishing a series of structures around the river.

The Kashinathpur point of the river is the connecting point of Santhia and Sujanagar upazila. Different authorities have taken different initiatives but the river’s situation remains unchanged.

During a recent visit to Kashinathpur haat, this correspondent found that people dump garbage from Kashinathpur haat on both sides of the culvert, while encroachment continues unabated by the pile of garbage.

Meer Monjur Elahi, chairman of Kashinathpur union parishad, said the killing of the river began in the 80s after the launch of an



irrigation project.

“Since introducing the irrigation project, the river turned into a narrow canal, as people started cultivating paddy by encroaching river banks,” he added.

Md Mosharaf Hossain, assistant director of Pabna Water Development Board, said WDB launched the irrigation project in the Atrai river for the sake of increasing crop cultivation in this region.

“We have several sluice gates for controlling the flow of water. We are preserving water and

supplying it according to our needs,” he said.

However, during the visit to the sluice gate beside the Kashinathpur haat, this correspondent found only a few feet of the canal exists, with no flow of water.

People are cultivating paddy while many establishments exist around the river, encroaching on river banks.

However, owners of these structures have claimed that they all have legal land documents, signed by the relevant government authorities.

Sultan Hoossain, a shopkeeper running his business on the river bank, claimed, “This is not a river land. I bought the land earlier, abiding by all legal procedures.”

Locals and environmentalists have claimed that the destruction of the Atrai river has not only affected the environment but also the lives of the people who depended on the river for their livelihoods.

The situation calls for immediate action to restore the river’s natural flow of water and prevent further encroachment, they added.

# The bridge that has not been crossed

Locals suffer as approach roads yet to be set up in 3yrs

MENTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Thousands of people from seven villages have been suffering as a concrete bridge remains without approach roads in Kaerchak area of Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar district for three years.

Locals said, the bridge was unplanned and no one uses it; the reason being that there is no road on both sides of the bridge.

Visiting the site recently, this correspondent saw that the bridge built on top of the canal was lying there like an isolated island. There’s no connecting road on either side of it. The canal has also dried up. People are crossing the bridge through the dried-up canal.

Khasruzzaman, a local union parishad member, said a bridge is needed here. But the bridge is about 15-16 feet high and there’s no need for such a high bridge. It was constructed without planning, due to which no one is benefitting from this bridge.



Shatirul Islam, a resident of the village, said most people of this Haor area are involved in agricultural activities and they have to carry their agro-products to nearby areas. But the dilapidated condition of the road have been hampering smooth transportation of the products.

The government spent Tk 30 lakh on this bridge, but many parts of the bridge has already broken down, he added.

Bhukshimoil Union Parishad chairman Azizur Rahman Monir, said soil has been laid out on both sides of the bridge this year. Hopefully the road will be ready for walking within next year.



Upazila Project Implementation Officer (PIO) Shimul Ali said soil was placed on the connecting road on both sides of the bridge, but it was swept away by flood water.

Necessary steps will be taken for constructing the approach roads, he added.



Adorned in colourful attires, residents of Khulna walk in a rally, celebrating Khulna’s 142nd anniversary yesterday. The rally was organised by Greater Khulna Development Struggle Coordination Committee. This photo was taken in the city’s Shibbari Mor area.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

 <b>Rajshahi City Corporation</b> Engineering Department Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi					
Memo No. 46.12.5081.006.07.205.2022.410 <b>Invitation for Tenders (IFT)</b> 06/2022-23					
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal ( <a href="http://www.eprocure.gov.bd">http://www.eprocure.gov.bd</a> ) for the procurement of the following goods:					
SL. No.	ID No.	Reference No.	Name of works	Tender/proposal document last selling time and date	
1.	823197	46.12.5081.006.07.205.2022.409	Supply & Installation of 800 KVA Substation, 300 KVA Generator and Related Goods at Anex Building & Nagar Bhaban.	12.30pm on 17-May-2023	
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal ( <a href="http://www.eprocure.gov.bd">http://www.eprocure.gov.bd</a> ) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ( <a href="mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd">helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd</a> ).					
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