



Sand, shoal and struggle

A perilous passage through the Padma river

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Abdul Hakim, a day labourer from Shilaidah village in Kushtia, faces increasing difficulty crossing the Padma to get to Pabna town. The once familiar passage across the Padma, a lifeline between his home and profession, has morphed into a

The intense heat of the sand makes the journey nearly impossible, Jubayer added.

Manik Hossain, a boatman at Shilaidah ghat, said, "Previously, several hundred individuals would journey between Pabna and Kushtia via the Padma daily. However, due to the extensive shoals now present, half of the passengers have opted out of this mode of transportation."

Manik attributes the problem to reduced water flow from upstream.

"The river dries up during the summer months due to reduced water flow from upstream, leading to difficulties for commuters," he explained.

Anwar Hossain, an ice cream vendor from Koshba village in Kumarkhali, has stopped travelling to Pabna markets.

"I used to sell 'Kulfi' at the Pabna markets but ceased my trips there recently due to the challenging conditions of crossing the Padma in the past few weeks," he said.

Shahidur Rahman, the secretary of Bangladesh Nodi Bachao Andolon in Pabna, reiterated the severe impact of Farakkah on the Padma River, which leads to prolonged dry spells in many areas of the river, causing immense hardship, especially for low-income people.

Md Mosharaf Hossain, assistant

The river dries up during the summer months due to reduced water flow from upstream, leading to difficulties for commuters.

MANIK HOSSAIN, a boatman at Shilaidah ghat

daunting odyssey.

"I have to now walk three kilometres across the shoal and ride two boats over a one-kilometre stretch of water," he said.

The Padma river begins to dry up from the end of November and doesn't recover until late July, depending on the monsoon.

The shoal between Shilaidah and Pabna extends over three kilometres of the four-kilometre crossing, leaving only two small areas with navigable water during this season.

What used to be a straightforward



What used to be a straightforward trip now takes up to two hours, with the hot sand making the journey even more challenging. PHOTO: STAR

trip now takes up to two hours, with the hot sand making the journey even more challenging.

At Shilaidah ghat in Kushtia, dozens of workers were seen trudging across the shoal, resembling a desert landscape.

"Crossing the Padma feels like travelling across a desert, with vast shoals covering three out of the four kilometres and only small sections of water remaining," said Jubayer Hossain, another commuter.

director of Pabna's water development board, said, "Navigating the Padma becomes challenging every summer, and the current situation has worsened due to insufficient water flow from upstream and scanty rainfall."

Additionally, the lack of rainfall this summer exacerbates the situation. The river will revive once the monsoon water arrives, Mosharaf added.

Monitor markets to keep prices under control

Instructs PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday gave instructions to monitor the market to control the prices of essential goods, said Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain after a meeting held at the PMO.

Mahbub said, "Although the supply of some goods is adequate, there is an artificial price hike in the market," he added.

The cabinet meeting also approved the proposal for Bangladesh to adopt the Apostille Convention, 1961 which facilitates the use of public documents abroad.

Regarding this, the cabinet secretary said, "When going abroad, students or individuals need to verify their documents. In cases where the respective country's embassy is not present in Bangladesh, documents are usually submitted to the embassy in Delhi for authentication. This causes a number of complications. Adopting the convention will relieve Bangladeshi students and others from this complexity."

NEW LAW FOR CEC, EC SALARIES
The government is also set to create a new law

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Tears of grief, instead of joy

Abontika's mother says after receiving her daughter's last academic result

KHALID BIN NAZRUL, Cumilla

Perhaps joy and festivity swept through the homes of law students from Jagannath University's batch-14 as their final results for the bachelor's degree were announced on Sunday.

While the majority of parents would have been extremely pleased with their children's accomplishments, Tahmina Shabnam, mother of Fairuz Abontika, broke down in tears when she learned the results of her daughter, who is no longer with her.

"A day of joy has instead become one of sorrow and regret. The loss of Abontika has devastated us. How are we going to deal with this?" Tahmina cried.

With a grade point average of 3.65 out of 4, Abontika secured third position in her batch. Her final semester grade was 3.73, according to Nurunnahar, an associate professor of the law department at JnU.

Abontika was a bright student who pursued her education at Nawab Faizunnesa Govt Girls' High School. She consistently received good grades on her school and board examinations.

After achieving a GPA-5 in her SSC and maintaining consistency in her

HSC exams, Abontika was selected to pursue general duty pilot training in the Air Force. However, she had to turn down the offer because of health issues.

"For years, I have stood outside classrooms and exam halls, waiting for my daughter. I remember the smile of contentment on her face when her results came out. That smile only lives in my memories now," said Tahmina as tears rolled down her cheeks.

On March 15, Abontika died by suicide after sharing a status on Facebook, blaming her classmate Raihan Siddique Amman and assistant proctor Din Islam for her death.

She accused Amman of harassing her repeatedly, hurling sexual abuse and spreading rumours about her on campus, under the refuge of the assistant proctor.

Following the incident, her mother filed a case against the two with Cumilla Kotwali Police Station, accusing them of abetting suicide.

They were arrested and taken into remand, following which Din Islam was granted bail by the High Court. Meanwhile, Amman remains behind bars, said inspector Mujibur Rahman of judge court in Cumilla.



BR to buy 200 new carriages

Looks to expand services in south-western region

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway will buy 200 broad gauge passenger carriages from an Indian company aiming to expand its service in south-western region, benefiting from the newly constructed rail line via Padma Bridge.

BR yesterday signed a Tk 1,205 crore contract with RITES Ltd of India to procure the carriages, which will help replace many decade-old ones.

As per the contract, the Indian company will start delivering carriages within 20 months from yesterday and complete shipment of all carriages within three years.

Zaidul Islam, project director, and Rajeev Chaudhary, executive director (expotech) of RITES Ltd, signed the contract at Rail Bhaban in Dhaka.

BR in March 2022 took the Tk 1,704.66 crore project to procure the 200 BG carriages to mitigate its long standing crisis for passenger carriages.

BR made the procurement deal more than two years after the

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GRIDLOCK AT MIRPUR-10

BUSES RUN WILD as cops 'look away'

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Stuck at the Mirpur-10 intersection, commuters may wonder why authorities cannot solve the nagging tailback problem despite knowing the solutions.

A visit there is enough to know why people suffer daily from the gridlock: a mindless competition of buses to get more

Drivers block the road to pick up passengers, causing constant tailbacks in all directions. Despite traffic police presence, officials ignore these violations for "unknown reasons."

TWO BUS STAFFERS

passengers.

Commuters, locals and even transport workers said that buses on this route partially block the intersection disregarding all traffic rules.

They also blamed the lack of monitoring



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

by the traffic police department, which has its zonal office right in the middle of the intersection.

The gridlock worsens during rush hours and tailbacks go up to a quarter kilometre on all four directions the intersection

connects.

"I use this road almost every day to drop off and pick up my children from their school at Mirpur 13. Usually, it takes about 15-20 minutes, if not more, to cross the

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ইজারা নবায়ন সংক্রান্ত

জরুরী গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়, সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ, সম্পত্তি শাখার স্মারক নং- ৩৫.০০.০০০০.০২৩.১৮.০০৯.২৪-১১১, তারিখঃ ১৬/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ এর নির্দেশনা মোতাবেক মানিকগঞ্জ সড়ক বিভাগের আওতাধীন সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের ভূমিতে স্থাপিত রিফুয়েলিং স্টেশনের ইজারা (প্রবেশপথসহ) এবং ব্যক্তি মালিকানাধীন ভূমিতে স্থাপিত রিফুয়েলিং স্টেশনে যাতায়াতের প্রবেশপথের ভূমির ইজারাকৃত যে সকল ইজারাদার ২০২২-২০২৩ পর্যন্ত ইজারা নবায়ন করেন নি, তাদেরকে জুন ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ এর মধ্যে সকল বকেয়া ইজারা মাশুল পরিশোধ করে নবায়নের প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

অনুরোধক্রমে,
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সড়ক বিভাগ, মানিকগঞ্জ

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