



Crafts in the Market 1: Tailor

Crafts in the Market 2: Sugar Cane Juicer

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

Two entrepreneurs at their machines: a tailor and a sugar cane juice vendor. The Bazaar is not only a place for goods, but one for services for trade too.

Caption by Alex Halligey



Religious Practices:

Photographer: Hanna Ruszczuk

Although, as with the rest of Bangladesh, Noapara is predominantly Muslim, Hindu temples are colourful sights and vibrant audio presence in the city centre.

Caption by Alex Halligey



Water in Noapara

Photographer: Alex Halligey

Both ground and surface water are used as water sources in Noapara. Water is supplied to the community either through tubewells or through pipelines. In the recent past, the percentage of people living in the municipality getting their water supply through pipelines has increased from 1% to 30%. Access to safe drinking water is strained particularly in the poorer neighbourhoods due to high concentrations of naturally occurring arsenic. Salinity is not recognised as a problem in Noapara.

Caption by Feisal Rahman, Hanna Ruszczyk and Alex Halligey



Daily Eating:

Photographer: Hanna Ruszczyk

A kitchen/vegetables market in Noapara. Vegetables typically are sourced from local growers in Noapara and surroundings areas.

Caption by Feisal Rahman



Job sources and the labouring body:

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

Loading and unloading of various types of materials transported via the Noapara river port and associated businesses generate a considerable number of jobs for the community members. These goods are then distributed across Bangladesh via the rail and road networks, both of which run through Noapara in line with the river.

Caption by Alex Halligey and Feisal Rahman



Livelihoods and Sociability

Photographer: Hanna Rusczyk

A local café in Noapara. These cafés are places of social gathering and are sources of income for families like the one shown in this picture.

Caption by Feisal Rahman and Juel Mahmud



River Crossing, Noapara

Photographer: Hanna Rusczyk

Boats and Ferries are used by many in Noapara for daily commutes to and from surrounding areas.

Caption by Istiak Ahmed and Alex Halligey



Storytelling Workshop

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

Here Noapara residents act out and narrate the preparation of their favourite meals. Rice was overwhelmingly the favourite and the most regular meal. A few participants expressed a preference for fish and said they were able to eat it a couple of times a week.

Caption by Alex Helligey



Drug Use Concerns

Photographer: Hanna Ruszczyk

Participants in the storytelling workshop raised concerns over drug use in Noapara, especially among young men. This scene shows a young man who should be in school loitering outside and smoking some kind of illegal stimulant. Workshop participants said they believe

education is key to socio-economic upliftment and are disheartened at Noapara teenagers' lack of motivation to keep attending school.

Caption by Alex Helligey



Voicing Concerns, Having them Heard

Photographer : Hanna Ruszczyk

In the final scene of the Noapara street performance, this local resident took on the role of voicing concerns around health care and the precarity of livelihood earning in his community, the informal settlement of Noapara. The theatre allowed the participants to share their concerns with the audience and fellow residents from Noapara.

Caption by Istiak Ahmed and Alex Halligey.



Just Outside the City

Photographer: Hanna ruszczyk

Just outside of the city , driving out of Noapara , you are quickly in a rural landscape . This picture shows the beauty of nature in Bangladesh , as well as proving a glimpse pf peri-urban landscape and livelihoods that are part of the functioning of Noapara: Fishing and the river as a source of water and transport .

Caption by Mahmuda Mity and Alex Halligey



River City

Photographer : Jinia Nowrin

This photo shows how Noapara is positioned in relation to the Bhairab River and symbolises its economic dependency on this waterway.

Caption by Sumaiya Binte Selim Shudha



Road City

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

The main road of Noapara and one of the key arteries for distributing imported goods across Bangladesh. Between this road and the river is the railway.

Caption by Alex Halligey



Arriving at Work

Photograph : Jinia Nowrin

This jute factory is one of the biggest employers in Noapara. People aspire to work at this company where the pay and working conditions are considered to be good. At 2:00 pm, female workers are seen returning to start their post-lunch shift.

Caption by Sumaiya Binte Selim Shudha and Hanna Ruszczyk



Waste Management

Photographer: Alex Halligey

Dumpsites like the one seen in this picture are common in Noapara. Living next to and locomoting past the dumps is part of daily life. Abdur Razzak writes poetically of this scene: 'The Noapara dwellers are inhaling as well as exhaling polluted air.' These dumpsites however are also a source of livelihood for rag-pickers in the city.

Caption by Alex Halligey, Juel Mahmud, Jinia Nowrin and Abdur Razzak



Railway Living:

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

The river, railway line and main road in Noapara all run in parallel lines to one another and in the listed order. Living, working and socialising in Noapara, especially in the informal

settlement all happen across the railway tracks, which makes for frequent railway accidents and fatalities.

Caption by Jinia Nowrin and Alex Halligey



Inspiring Local residents with the project Activities – Jinia Nowrin in Action

Photographer: Hanna Ruszczyk

The photographer in this image, Jinia Nowrin, was a role model for many of the women she interacted with during the ten-day assignment with the Liveable Regional Cities Project. Women and girls expressed surprise that a woman could be a photographer. They were very impressed with the quality of the photographs she showed them. Jinia is proud of her photographic work and hopes to continue with this career after she finishes her undergraduate degree.

Caption by Hanna Ruszczyk

Mongla Water

Water is central to life in Mongla in the various ways which the photographs selected below represent.



Rainwater Harvesting

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

Residents unequivocally mentioned the scarcity of freshwater as the primary challenge in Mongla. Rising salinity in surface and groundwater sources severely limits access to freshwater throughout the year, forcing residents to collect and store rainwater during dry periods. As Sumaiya Binte Selim Shudha reflects this bucket collecting rainwater symbolises the struggle of rain harvesting, especially for marginal communities who cannot afford storage tanks.

Caption by Sumaiya Binte Selim Shudha, Hanna Ruszczyk, Alex Halligey and Feisal Rahman



Water for drinking: Supply Infrastructure

Photographer : Jinia Nowrin

This scene from the street theatre performance in Mongla, shows residents queueing at a hand pump (a tubewell) to collect drinking water. This would be water pumped from an enclosed pond/tank storing harvested rainwater.

Caption by Abdur Razzak and Alex Halligey



Water for Cleaning

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

Laundry, cleaning fish and bathing all take place in the numerous ponds of Mongla. Strictly speaking the water is not potable, although residents do drink from the open ponds, either using water purification tablets or taking their chances with the health risks.

Caption by Alex Halligey, Abdur Razzak, Jinia Nowrin, Mahmuda Mity, Istiak Ahmed



Waterways for Communication

Photograph by Jinia Nowrin

A blurry vision through the ferry waiting room of the Pashur river which connects Mongla to the mainland. The rivers around Mongla form the major communication system of Mongla.

Caption by Sumaiya Binte Selim Shudha, Juel Mahamud and Alex Halligey



Informal Settlement Housing
Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

A typical informal settlement in Mongla.

Caption by Mahmuda Mity and Alex Halligey

In Mongla everyone spoke about fish. Residents love the taste of fresh fish and their ability to go into their family ponds and catch fish. One respondent said, "Fish is life!" No one spoke positively of shrimp farming and pointed to its relationship with the destruction of the natural environment.

Caption by Hanna Ruszczyk



The Local Fish Market
Photograph by Jinia Nowrin

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Caption by Hanna Ruszczyk



Export Processing Zone
Photographer: Hanna Ruszczyk

The Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Mongla currently employs over 5,000 employees, overwhelmingly women. This is in accordance with national strategy to create jobs especially for women. The central government wants to triple the employment of Mongla’s EPZ by 2025. How this will be done in an environment where there are acute freshwater shortages and the distinct possibility of environmental degradation remains to be seen.

Caption by Juel Mahamud, Hanna Ruszczyk and Feisal Rahman



Food Preparations

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

Jinia shadowed this Mongla resident from the informal settlement to see her daily activities of cleaning, laundry and food preparation.



Trade

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

The vibrant Bazar of Mongla sees entrepreneurs selling all sorts of goods from fresh produce, fish and meat to pre-packaged food to plastic goods.

Caption by Juel Mahamud and Alex Halligey



River Crossing, Mongla

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

This picture shows the daily morning commute of the workers between the residential, 'city proper' section of Mongla and the EPZ on the mainland. Istiak Ahmed writes that the image evokes some of the things that would make for migrant-friendly cities: availability of work, short commutes and accessible means of transport. Although several respondents in Mongla expressed the limitations of no road bridge access to the city. Certainly reliance on the river ferry would limit the amount of people Mongla could support.

Caption by Istiak Ahmed and Feisal Rahman



Food Safety

Photographer: Hanna Ruszczyk

Both in Mongla and in Noapara, shopkeepers and residents, explained that people now buy food in packages, rather than in bulk from a sack, due to concerns about safety. This also extends to 'snack foods' which are not very healthy and have empty calories.

Caption by Hanna Ruszczyk



Playing in the Public Park
Photographer: Hanna Ruszczyk

The Children's Park in Mongla is a gathering place and contributes to social capital aspects of liveability.

Caption by Feisal Rahman



Floating Solar Farm

Photograph by Jinia Nowrin

Mongla is also the home to many innovative interventions to enhance the resilience of the local community, including this solar power initiative.

Caption by Feisal Rahman



Street Life

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

This is a regular local street in Mongla. This photo exhibits multiple elements of liveability: local roads, drainage, housing structures and transport in Mongla.

Caption by Feisal Rahman



Bird's Eye View, Mongla

Photographer: Istiak Ahmed

Mongla seen from one of its tallest buildings, a residential apartment building for government officials. A large part of the city is centred round this single large pond

Caption by Alex Halligey and Istiak Ahmed



Mongla from Across the River

Photographer: Jinia Nowrin

The city of Mongla is seen here from the mainland side of the Pashur River, where the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) is located. This ferry port is Mongla residents' gateway to the rest of Bangladesh.

Caption by Alex Halligey



Street Theatre Performance, Mongla

Photographer: Alex Halligey

Torrential rain on the day of our street theatre performance in Mongla meant we had to perform in the ferry waiting room. People arriving off the ferries and waiting to catch them were all drawn into the action. The scene finished with the performers calling out things they loved about Mongla, things they would like to change, things they dream of for the future of the city, things they remembered from their childhoods. Audience members joined in spontaneously at the end, citing their own frustrations with finding consistent and well-paid work.

Caption by Alex Halligey



Seaport

Photographer: Hanna Ruszczyk

Mongla is Bangladesh's second biggest international sea port after Chittagong and one of the major reasons it is seen as a favourable location for industrial development. The seaport means potential for increasing job provision through industry and port labour. Interestingly for our project, many goods are decanted here into smaller ships to be taking upriver to the Noapara river port.

Caption by Alex Halligey



On the Way to the Sundarbans

Photographer: Hanna Ruszczyk

Mongla city is located across the Pashur River on land that quickly merges into the Sundarbans mangroves, a rare ecological wonder extending out into the Bay of Bengal. Mongla is the last human settlement in Bangladesh before the Sundarbans and the port functions as the entry point for tourists to ferry across to see the forest.

Caption by Alex Halligey