

# Hundreds line up to resist move to shift gas plant from Ashuganj

All-party Action Committee formed to cancel decision to shift NGL Fractionation Plant of Rupantarito Natural Gas Company to Koilastila, Sylhet by March 10

SK SHAHIDUL ISLAM, B'baria

Hundreds of people came down the Dhaka-Sylhet highway here on Wednesday to protest a decision to shift the NGL Fractionation Plant of Rupantarito Natural Gas Company from Ashuganj here to Koilastila in Sylhet.

Part of the highway from Ashuganj toll plaza to Sunarampur village were crowded with people from all walks of life including political figures, teachers and students of different schools and colleges and businessmen to express their solidarity with the resistance movement called by the All-party Action Committee.

Led by the Action Committee convenor Md Isa Khan, people lined up by hundreds near Ashuganj toll plaza forming a human chain.

Later, they held a rally at Ashugonj Rail Gate field with the Action Committee convenor Md Isa Khan in the chair.

A month-long programme was announced from the rally to prevent shifting of the plant. They expressed their firm determination to resist the evil move 'even by shedding their blood'.

The speakers demanded of the authorities concerned to cancel the decision of shifting of the plant by March 10, otherwise, they declared to forge a tougher agitation including hartal (strike). They declared to stop the Ashuganj Power Plant and the Zia Fertilizer Company Limited.

The rally was addressed, among others, by member secretary of the committee Md Shahjahan Alam Sajju, Md Bazlur Rahman Bhuiyan, Abdul Hakim, Md Abdullah Al Mamun, Md Tanvir Hossain, Md Salim Pervez, Md Neaz Khan and Tanshen.

Earlier, they submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister



PHOTO: STAR

People from all walks of life line up in their hundreds from Ashuganj toll plaza to Sunarampur village on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway to protest a decision to shift the NGL Fractional Plant of Rupantarito Natural Gas Company from Ashuganj to Koilastila.

through Ashuganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO).

The demonstrators brought out another angry procession in Ashuganj Bandar town. They paraded the main streets of the town and held a protest rally there.

Previously, the demonstrators held a press conference at Ashuganj Sadar Union Parishad Auditorium on Monday.

Action committee member secretary Principal Md Shahjahan Alam Sajju read their demands.

Among others, Md Mojibur Rahman Majnu, Char-tala Union Paishad (UP) Chairman, Sajju Khan, Chairman of Durgapur UP, Ibrahim Molla, acting Chairman of Ashuganj UP, Haji Md Shahjahan, Jatiya Party central leader Md Mojibur Rahman, freedom fighter

Sheikh Jashim Uddin, businessman Mijanuar Rahman, ex-chairman Ismail Seraji, Workers' Party leader Abdul Hakim, Jubo League leader Md Hanif, Chhatra League President Matiur Rahman Sarker, Mubarak Ali Chowdury and Subedar (retd) Abdul Malek addressed the conference.

## Part of Dhaka-Sylhet highway unfit for use of vehicles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Part of the Dhaka-Sylhet highway stretching from Jagadishpur to Sherpur through Srimongal and Moulvibazar towns has become a death trap to passengers.

Accidents occur frequently along the narrow 167-kilometre portion of the highway due to lack of adequate space on its both sides.

Drivers ply their vehicles with great risk along the portion of the highway, but the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) did not take any step to save lives and people's property.

Ignoring the issue, work along the aforementioned part of the highway had been progressing. The RHD undertook the project at a cost of Tk 50 lakh. Forty per cent of the work had already been completed, according to the RHD sources.

When contacted with the RHD executive engineer, he told The Daily Star about lack of provision for extension of the highway in the project profile.

However, he told this correspondent he already submitted a proposal to the higher authorities which was under process.

# 'Reopen Indian transit route thru' Chilahati'

Bangladeshi passport holders intending to visit India for treatment or for reunion with relatives suggest bilateral talks on the issue

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Closure of Holdibari Land Customs Checkpoint in Kutchbihar by India has created lots of problems for hundreds of Bangladeshi passport holders intending to visit India for treatment or for reunion with their relatives.

Local people have demanded reopening of the route immediately through bilateral talks of high officials of both the countries.

Chilahati Land Customs Checkpoint here became inoperative due to the Indian Immigration authorities' unilateral decision on June 28, 2002. The international transit route had been in use for the outgoing and incoming travellers of both the countries during the 1953-2002 period. Every year thousands of people used to travel through the route, according to locals.

A large number of Biharis (Urdu speaking people) living in Saidpur Railway City face problems to meet their relatives in India. They had come to Bangladesh as refugees after partition of the sub-continent in 1947.

Chilahati Land Customs Checkpoint officials tried to persuade their Indian counterparts to reopen the route but in vain.

At present, five Land Customs

personnel are posted at Chilahati checkpoint. They include a Customs inspector, a female MLSS, two guards and a peon employed on master role basis.

In response to a query by this correspondent, peon Farid told that he had been a man of the locality. Now his duty is to hoist the national flag of Bangladesh daily while other personnel stay at Saidpur and

Nilphamari. They draw salary without work.

After closure of Holdibari checkpoint, Bangladeshi passport holders began to travel through Burimari checkpoint in Lalmonirhat and Chengrabandha checkpoint in India crossing a long distance. Many Bangladeshi travellers have alleged, they are being harassed by the Indian hoodlums in this route.



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of closed Chilahati Land Customs Checkpoint in Nilphamari. A unilateral decision by India to close down Holdibari checkpoint in Kutchbihar has resulted in its closure since June 28, 2002. Hundreds of Bangladeshi passport holders intending to visit India face lots of problems.

## 140 operated upon for free by Dutch plastic surgeons

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

About 140 patients were operated upon and over 400 patients treated

at a week-long plastic surgery camp which concluded here on Tuesday.

Held at Faridpur Medical College Hospital, the camp was



PHOTO: STAR

Noted Dutch plastic surgeon Dr Paulus H M Spauwen inquiring about the welfare of a patient during a week-long plastic surgery camp held at Faridpur recently. About 140 patients were operated upon in the camp by a three-member team of plastic surgeons from Holland.

## THREAT TO HASINA 8 JCD leaders sued in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Eight Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders were sued on Wednesday for threatening Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) President Aminuzzaman filed the case with the court of magistrate Masudul Huq, Gaibandha.

They are JCD President Azizul Bari, General Secretary Saiful Bari, members Sultan Salauddin, Salimuzzaman, Hasem Mahmud, Saiful Islam, Abdul Hakim and Dulal Hossain.

Another charge against the JCD leaders was making defamatory and provocative statement against Hasina.

The petitioners complained that the accused persons threatened the Awami League president and BCL leaders at a meeting held on the premises of Aparajeyo Bangla in Dhaka University after a procession on the campus on February 3. They also abused Shiekh Hasina with filthy language at the meeting.

After hearing, the magistrate recorded the plaintiffs' petition. Thirty pro-Awami League lawyers pleaded the prosecution. The court took the case into cognizance and ordered an investigation.

## Tributes paid to Osmani

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

A discussion meeting was held here on Wednesday to mark the 21st anniversary of death of General MAG Osmani, Commander-in-Chief of Bangladesh forces during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971.

Madaripur Sangbadik Kalyan Samity organised the discussion in Madaripur Press Club. Discussants paid rich tributes to the great leader.

The meeting was presided over by Golam Mowla Akand (Jugantar).

The speakers recalled the outstanding role of the great leader during the Liberation War. They urged the political leaders to play a selfless role to build the nation following his footsteps. They opined that his absence is being felt sharply with the passage of time. His selfless leadership could overcome the existing critical period of the nation, heysaid.

After the discussion, prayers were offered for the salvation of the departed soul of the great leader.

## Teachers' Day observed at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Rajshahi University authorities yesterday observed Shaheed Dr Shamsuzzoha Day on the campus as Teachers' Day in a befitting manner.

Zoha Day is being observed every year on this day in memory of Dr Zoha, the then Rajshahi University Proctor and an associate professor of Chemistry Department.

He was killed by the then Pakistani military junta in front of the university main gate when trying to protect his beloved students from their guns and bayonets.

Vice chancellor Prof Faisal Islam Faruki and other high officials of the university placed wreath at Dr Zoha's grave.

Black flags were hoisted atop all buildings of the university including the administration building, VC's residence, library and student halls.

A lecture titled Teachers Role in Building Society was held at the Senate building where former Dhaka University vice chancellor and the vice chancellor of the University of Development Alternatives

(UDA) Prof EmajUddin read out a key note paper.

Ruta demanded of the government to declare February 18 'National Teachers Day.'

## Tk 40 cr project for rehabilitation of the handicapped

BSS, Barisal

A Tk 40 crore project has been undertaken for development and rehabilitation of handicapped people of Charfassion upazila in Bhola.

Local NGO, Sunrise, being financed by the government of Denmark, is implementing the project this fiscal, according to an official source.

Under the project, at least 500 handicapped people will be provided with accommodation at Char Kalmi village.

A technical training centre will be constructed on four acres of land and a shopping bag manufacturing factory will be built on two acres of land.

When contacted with Sunrise Chairman Munir Hossain, he told they had already implemented similar projects in Gazipur and Noakhali.

A preparatory meeting was held at Baburhat to make people aware about the project. Sunrise Chairman Munir Hossain presided over the meeting while it was attended by Charfassion Upazila Nirbahi Officer.

# BSF bid to erect barbed-wire fence along Akhaura border foiled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Two attempts by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) to erect barbed wire fence along the 'No Man's Land' near Anwarpur and Kashinagar border in Akhaura upazila was foiled jointly by the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and villagers on Wednesday and Thursday.

The BSF members along with about 200 hundred Indian people were erecting the barbed wire on 'No Man's Land' near Anwarpur village at around 8 am on the day. Being informed, local villagers and the BDR 'jawns' intervened. As a result, the BSF stopped erecting the illegal fence temporarily.

According to the BDR sources, the BSF also started erecting barbed wire fence on the 'No Man's Land' near Kashinagar village on Wednesday. The BSF stopped erecting the fence due to

the BDR resistance.

According to the BDR sources, the BSF also attempted to erect barbed wire fence on 'No Man's Land' along Border Pillars No 2019 (85) and 2019 (95) in Azampur, Akhaura on February 6. The BSF also tried to erect barbed wire fence near Border Pillar No 2018 (45) and 2018 (55) at Rajapur village in Akhaura.

Following the BDR protest, the BSF stopped erecting the fences.

Two villagers named Jahangir Alam, 50, and Farid Mia, 39, of Anwarpur told this correspondent that the BSF along with Indian villagers tried to erect barbed wire fence on 'No Man's Land' here on several occasions.

However, the BDR already sent a letter to the BSF to stop erecting illegal barbed wire fence on 'No Man's Land.

A move is underway to hold a BDR-BSF flag meeting, according to official sources in the BDR.

## Shrimp looted by 'Gram Sarker chief'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A group of people led by a Gram Sarker chief allegedly looted shrimp worth over three lakh taka from an enclosure in Beel Shimul Baria in Debhata upazila on Thursday.

Gram Sarker chief Abdur Rahman and his men attacked shrimp cultivator Kamrul Islam along with his workers and drove them out of it. Later, they looted shrimp from there. Kamrul had been cultivating shrimp there for a long period, according to police.

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