

Thousands demand gas supply to two B'baria upazilas

Tougher action including stoppage of road, rail communication threatened

Sk SHAHIDUL ISLAM, B'baria

The speakers at a grand rally at Kuti yesterday urged the government to supply gas to Kasba and Akhaura upazilas within six months, or 'face a tougher action.'

The action includes stoppage of railway and road communications between Sylhet-Chittagong and Brahmanbari-Chittagong.

About 3,500 people of the two upazilas assembled at the massive rally organised by the action committee and cried for gas in one voice.

The rally was presided over by ex-BNP member of parliament (MP) Mia Abdullah Wazed, also an industrialist.

In the meeting, they put forward their 8-point demand to government for the interest of protection of 200 local industries. Other demands included protection of deforestation through stoppage of felling of trees for firewood and establishment of industrial park at Wazednagar.

In the meeting, action committees were also formed at union level to gear up the agitation.

The meeting was addressed,



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of a grand rally held yesterday at Kuti in Kasba upazila, Brahmanbaria for immediate gas supply to Kasba and Akhaura upazilas.

among others, by Awami League (AL) leader Alhaj AB Siddiki, Jatiya Party leader Md Shahidul Hossain, upazila chairman advocate Md Idris Bhuiyan, ex-chairman Sahidur

Rahman, Md Nayeb Ali Bhuiyan, chairman Md Monirul Islam Monir, chairman jakir Hossain Dulal, AL leader and chairman Abdul Kadir, ex-chairman Amalendo Shaha,

Jamaat leader Kazi Sirajul Islam, Oikya Jote leader Md Yakub Ali, Munshi Motaher Hossain, freedom fighter Md Shahjahan and Syedur Rahman.

BNP leader's bid to build market on RMCH campus slated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Drug store owners here recently submitted a memorandum to the director of Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) asking to prevent a local BNP leader from constructing a market on the campus.

The market will have a residential hotel, a restaurant and a few drug stores.

This has angered the drug store

owners who threatened a tougher agitation if the plan was not cancelled immediately.

Ignoring the highest bidder, the RMCH authorities have allegedly awarded the work to the district BNP leader for construction of a canteen-cum-department store on 4,800 square feet area in the hospital compound.

According to the hospital authorities, the canteen-cum-department store would benefit the staff and poor attendants of patients.

But the BNP leader began construction of a two-storied building on the land violating the terms and conditions of the tender and asked the interested drug store owners to contact him for possession of shops at the site, sources alleged.

While talking to The Daily Star, RMCH director Brigadier General Abul Kalam Azad told the hospital authorities will not allow anyone to violate the terms and conditions of the tender. 'The work is yet to be finished and there will no more than

a canteen,' he asserted.

Meanwhile, a group of BNP leaders led by Altaf have already captured a number of government lands in the city to turn into markets. The Rajshahi City Corporation authorities assisted them. The captured areas are Sonadighi market, part of the RDA market, a large garden of New Market, roadside ditches at Gourhanga.

UNO, five others sued for illegally occupying houses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), three sub-inspectors (SIs) of police and two others were sued yesterday for occupying a shop at Assassuni illegally.

They are Assassuni UNO Iqbal Hossain, sub-inspectors Assassuni PS Rejaul Islam, Enamul Haq and Abdur Razzak and two others.

Kamrul Islam of Assassuni has filed the case with the Assistant Judge's Court. The complainant, in his statement said, he has been running a restaurant and living along his family beside it on one decimal of land donated by his late father in front of the Upazila Parishad for a long time. The accused persons entered into his restaurant and house on May 16. They ransacked and threw the furniture and utensils on the road and drove away the family members from his house. They also beat up his wife, son, and cousins. Later, they locked the houses.

However, despite repeated attempts, the Assassuni UNO could not be contacted.

2 arrested with 'Hundi' money

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two persons were arrested and 'Hundi' money amounting to Tk 14 lakh was recovered from them by the detective branch (DB) of police here on Monday night.

They were arrested while they were smuggling out the money to India, according to Dinajpur police sources.

On receipt of a secret information, DB police raided Godagari village in Dinajpur Sadar upzaila and seized the money from the spot. Police also seized a few mobile sets, 17 bottles of Phensidyl and a motor cycle during the drive. According to their confessions, Afzal Hossain of the satellite town here is their godfather.

Working children want social recognition

Over 700 participate in a unique rally held in Kurigram

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Working children at a big rally held in Kurigram recently have demanded due recognition of their contributions to their families and society and immediate solution to their problems.

Over 700 working children of 31 different professions participated in the rally jointly organised by Save the Children-UK and Solidarity, a local development organisation.

Kurigram deputy commissioner (DC) Md Azizur Rahman Mollah was present at the rally as the chief guest.

The working children placed their five-point demand in the rally. The demands included right to formal education, right to healthcare facilities, savings opportunity, sympathetic hearing to their problems and

a healthy working environment in their places of work.

They also urged their employers to take steps to improve their working condition while employers' representatives present at the rally assured to improve the same. The employers further assured to provide educational facilities to them.

While addressing, the DC assured the working children that the district administration would seriously consider to listen and solve their issues. He gave an announcement to organise a workshop involving all responsible district-level government officials in near future to find out a solution to the problems.

Other speakers have stressed the need for participation of all to solve working children's issues. They reminded the government

agencies of their role in circulating their issues all over and come out with a possible solution from suggestions of the concerned persons.

Among others, Kurigram Pourosova chairman Abu Bakar Siddiqui, former minister AKM Mayeedul Islam, chief of Poverty and Working Children's Project of Save the Children UK Lamia Rashid and chief of Justice and Violence Programme, Save the Children-UK U M Habibunnesa addressed the rally.

Apart from children, their employers, local administration officials, representatives of political parties and NGO officials participated in the rally.

Mahfuza Haque Lulu and Rafiqul Islam Sarkar of the Save the Children, UK conducted the programme.



PHOTO: A K M MOHSIN

Stone extractors at Jaflong in Sylhet heap up pieces of firewood on a riverbank. They collect stones and firewood from the river simultaneously.

Shaheed Capt Bashar Gate square being beautified

Appeal to find out grave of martyred freedom fighter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Work on beautification of the spot surrounding Shaheed Captain Bashar Gate here has been progressing fast.

The Zila Parishad has started the beautification work recently as per directive of State Minister for Education and Minister-in-Charge of Nilphamari District AN M Ehsanul Haque Milon. The state minister pledged beautification of the spot during inauguration of the gate by octogenarian Shaheed Janani (mother) Rizia Ahmed at a colourful function held on the Independence Day on March 26, 2003.

A memorial stone is also being built here. Names of all war heroes of the district who sacrificed their lives for the cause of independence of Bangladesh including Captain Bashar will be inscribed there.

Meanwhile, Shaheed Janani has urged the government to take an initiative to find out the grave of her son on the eve of Bashar's 34th martyrdom anniversary tomorrow.

Captain RAM Khairul Bashar fell a martyr on May 29, 1971 in Sher-e-Banglanagar, Dhaka. But the Pakistani occupation army concealed his last remains which is yet to be traced.

To mark his martyrdom anniversary, a milad mahfil and a discussion will be held at the Sabujpara residence of martyr's father Asir Uddin Ahmed, a noted educationist and former headmaster of Nilphamari High English School (now Government Boys' High School) in the district town.

Captain Bashar, former Officer Commanding of Station Supply Depot (SSD), Chittagong was the first army officer in Chittagong

Cantonment who dared to hoist the flag of independent Bangladesh atop the perambulator of his baby daughter during the non-cooperation movement in March 1971. He pushed forward his minor daughter's perambulator around the cantonment area and fell in wrath of Pakistani rulers. At that time, he actively resisted the Pakistani soldiers to unload sophisticated arms and ammunition from the ship, 'Swat'. He led the people in erecting road barricades to create obstacle on way to carry the arms and ammunition to the cantonment.

As the commanding officer of SSD, he led his soldiers to drive out the members of Baluch Regiment who besieged the SSD in a failed bid to capture the depot during the non-cooperation movement.

Bashar was promoted to rank of Major and posted to Pakistan. But instead of serving the Pakistani rulers he preferred to stay in Bangladesh and actively took part in the liberation war. On the fateful night of March 25, he came out of his cantonment residence along with his minor daughter and pregnant wife. He actively got involved himself in the liberation war.

At that time, people were asked, through Chittagong radio, to rally round young Bengali army officers including Captain Bashar. He fed the fighting Bengali soldiers from his own pocket for a remarkable period. He also shot down a Pakistani army helicopter in Halishahar area which created great enthusiasm among the Bengali fighters. People of Halishahar and surrounding areas still remember his bravery with gratitude.



PHOTO: STAR

A view of Shaheed Captain Bashar Gate in Nilphamari, built on the Independence Day on March 26, 2003. The Zila Parishad has undertaken a scheme to beautify its surrounding area recently. Bashar is in the inset.