

397 sacked Milk Vita employees demand reinstatement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

About 397 sacked employees of Baghabari Milk Vita Company yesterday at a press conference at Pabna Press Club urged the authorities concerned for their reinstatement.

Md Shahidul Islam, on behalf of the employees, addressed the press conference.

The press conference said the Milk Vita authorities sacked them illegally and they are passing their days in misery.

The press conference said the company authorities sacked them in two phases. Initially, 287 workers

were sacked through a notice issued on March 11. Afterwards, 110 more were sacked through another notice issued on August 1.

While narrating the woes of sacked staffers, the press conference said the company had recruited all of them following the rules and regulations properly. But it is a pity the Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Ministry sacked them terming them a burden to the company, the press conference said.

The conference said the company authorities violated the official rule by sacking them. Now the company authorities are trying to recruit workers

temporarily on master roll basis, the conference said.

The press conference alleged that the company bears a burden of heavy administration and its officials are corrupt. Although the company sacked skilled employees, but a large number of unskilled employees are still in service, the press conference said. They are now burden to the company, it said. The press conference said further there are 191 officials in the administration instead of 50 officials. The press conference urged the authorities concerned to investigate into the corruption of the administration personnel.

Kushtia villagers get Sono filter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Thirty-three poor families of Pragpur village in Daulatpur upazila got arsenic removal Sono filter for free.

Manab Shakti Unnayan Kendro (MSUK), an NGO, organised the distribution ceremony.

Daulatpur Upazila Nirbahi officer (UNO) Rupam Anwar distributed the filter as chief guest at a simple function held at Daulatpur Upazila Pahrissad on Thursday.

Among others, magistrate Monirul Islam, Dr Ziaul Haq of upazila health complex, upazila fisheries officer Hossain Ali Sawapan, MSUK programme manager M.M Rahman were present at the function.

MSUK sources said, the people of Pragpur village were worst affected by arsenicosis. Most of them drank arsenic contaminated water as they have no alternative to pure drinking water.

Sono is a simple and cheap filter made by available resources. It worked wonder in supplying arsenic free water in rural Bangladesh. It has successfully stopped spread of arsenicosis in 1,000 villages across the country. No arsenicosis patient was detected in the villages in the last two years following its use in the villages, according to its innovators.

It costs between Tk 1,600 to 2500 and its buyers do not have to use any ingredient or chemical to purify water.

The filter was approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Bangladesh government and the local Bureau of Isotope Hydrology Section of the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The government okayed it following various scientific tests including ETV-AM (Environmental Testing and Verification Programme for Arsenic Mitigation), innovators said.

Bangladeshi injured by BSF gunshot

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sathkira*

A Bangladeshi cattle trader sustained bullet injuries when Indian Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire on him near Keragachhi border in Kalaroa upazila on Monday night.

Injured Hafizur Rahman, 25, son of Eman Ali of Baksa village in Kalaroa upazila managed to enter the Bangladesh territory with the help of other cattle traders. He is now undergoing treatment at Sathkira Sadar hospital. His condition is stated to be critical, hospital sources said.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and police sources said, a group of Bangladeshi cattle traders went to India to buy cattle. When they reached Tarali on way back home, BSF fired two rounds of gunshots at them resulting in injuries to the victim.

However, BDR did not retaliate, BDR sources said.

On contact, Major Kamrul Hasan, Operations Officer of 41 Rifles Battalion confirmed the report.

FLOOD IN DISTRICTS



(Top to bottom) A makeshift roadside hotel in flooded Baniya Patti area in Sirajganj; flood victims' long wait for relief at Satbaria in Sujanagar upazila, Pabna and relief distribution among flood affected villagers at Ghona village in Manikganj.

Bandarban roads unfit for traffic

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bandarban*

Most of the roads in the hill district are unfit for traffic.

The roads are Bandarban-Ruma road, Bandarban-Chimbuk road and Bandarban-Roangchari road.

The roads became unfit for traffic due to recent heavy rainfall and landslide.

Commuters and pedestrians suffer a lot due to heavy mud and many potholes on the roads. Transport vehicles ply along the roads at risk.

During a visit, this correspondent

saw that vehicles like mini truck, jeep, car, and pick-up van were moving at risk along Bandarban-Ruma, Bandarban-Chimbuk and Bandarban-Roangchari roads.

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) officials said they are unable to repair the roads due to lack of fund. It needs several crores of taka to make the roads fit for communication, officials said.

Bandarban Road Division executive engineer Sitangshu Shaha said, 'We have submitted a proposal to the higher authorities just after the landslide, but they are yet to respond it.'

However, local people alleged negligence of duties of the authorities concerned and lack of regular maintenance.

They alleged the Bandarban Road Division authorities had refunded about Tk 80 lakh to the headquarters as unused fund in the last fiscal.

Frequent plying of heavy loaded trucks and lorries have also attributed to the situation, they said.

Local people have urged the caretaker government to rebuild and repair the damaged roads without further delay.

2 yrs RI for extortionist

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khagrachhari*

A magistrate court here yesterday sentenced an extortionist to two years rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a first ever judgment under the Speedy Tribunal Act in the district, court sources said.

The convict is Kartik. He was also fined Tk 1,000, in default, to suffer one month more RI.

First class magistrate Ahmed

Kabir pronounced the verdict.

The story, in brief, is that Kartik Devanath, Siblu Sikder and Sapon Dey went the Laxmichhari residence of Rajani Devanath, a businessman at Laxmichhari Bazar under Laxmichhari upazila on January 28. They demanded Tk 50,000 extortion from him and forcedly took Tk 20,000 at that time, Rajani alleged. They threatened him with the dire consequences for disclosing the matter to anybody and gave them three days ultimatum for payment of the rest Tk 30,000.

As the culprits went to his house again to collect the rest amount on January 31, he and his family members raised a hue and cry. Neighbours came to their help, chased and caught the culprits. Later, they handed over them to Laxmichhari police.

Rajani filed a case with the police station on February 1.

Sub-Inspector of Sadar Police Station Prabir Kumar Das, also Investigation Officer (IO) of the case said after investigation he found Kartik as the accused and the two others innocent. So, he submitted charge-sheet accusing Kartik only.

Police said, this was the first judgment under Speedy Tribunal Act-2002 in the district where a culprit got punishment within a short period.

Reception to SSC talents

A CORRESPONDENT, *Kurigram*

Bengali International School based in London yesterday accorded a reception to GPA-5 achievers of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination in Nageswari and Rajarhat upazilas.

Stipends were also distributed among 151 poor and meritorious students at the function.

Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) of respective upazilas presided.

Shyamal Dutt, Editor of Bhorer Kagoj attended the function as chief guest while Tasiq Ahmed, assistant vice president of ATN Bangla and John Wilson, a professor at Kings College, London attended as special guests. Shamsul Haque, local coordinator of the institute acted as moderator.

12.5x3



A pitiable condition of Jauwa Bridge on Sylhet-Sunamganj road.

PHOTO: STAR

14 Sylhet bridges in dilapidated state

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

About 14 bridges on Sylhet-Sunamganj road and Sylhet-Chhatak road are vulnerable for commuters.

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) did not take any measure to reconstruct those rather it allowed vehicular traffic to ply on the bridges amid risk.

Most of the bridges are narrow and one or two decades old.

The RHD declared Jauwa bridge on Sylhet-Sunamganj road abandoned because it was partially broken several weeks ago. The authorities concerned have constructed a diversion bridge for

vehicular traffic. But there is no plan for construction of any new bridge there.

Five out of seven bridges of Govindaganj-Chhatak portion of Sylhet-Chhatak road are narrow, risky and old. Gargaon, Hasnabad, Khargaon, Chhatak-I and Chhatak-II bridges, Govindaganj, Tokirai, Jalalpur, Zatia, Chechan-I and Chechan-II bridges on Sylhet-Sunamganj road are in pitiable condition.

Locals have demanded reconstruction of the bridges without further delay.

7x3