

SMUGGLERS-BDR AFFAIR ON BARENDRA EXPRESS

Passengers stop train, stage protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Passengers halted an intercity train for three hours at Panchbibi station in Joypurhat yesterday protesting carrying of smuggled goods in trains and alleged harassment by border troops in the name of raids.

Hundreds of passengers got down from Barendra Express that runs between Nilphamari and Rajshahi when it arrived at Panchbibi station at around 10:00am

and staged demonstration for three hours until 1:00pm.

They sat on the rail track just in front of the locomotive of the express train and held a rally, said sources in the headquarters of Bangladesh Railway's west zone in Rajshahi.

The agitators said the smugglers were carrying Indian fertiliser at different compartments of Barendra Express since it started from Nilphamari. Half an hour before the train reached

Panchbibi, some members of Bangladesh Rifles challenged the smugglers, they said.

At this stage, the smugglers spread the fertiliser inside the compartments by cutting sacks and threw the sacks bearing Indian seals out through the windows, they added.

Repulsed by an unpleasant smell coming out from the fertiliser, the passengers got down from the train.

The agitating passengers alleged the smugglers carry

Indian goods, including cloths, phenisyl, spices and fertilisers in trains on the rail route.

They stop the trains at their will at different places to load and unload the smuggled goods, alleged the agitators. Moreover, the border guards harass the passengers in the name of raiding the trains, they added.

The angry passengers withdrew the barricade after the railway authorities cleaned the compartments.



Students of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology demonstrate blocking the road near the main gate of the institution yesterday protesting torture on a student by transport workers.

Road blocked as bus workers beat up Ruet student

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Students of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) yesterday barricaded the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway as bus workers beat up a student the previous night.

The agitating students damaged a Dhaka bound coach of Modern Enterprise during the barricade from 9:30am to 1:30pm while the bus workers assaulted Quamrul Hasan, a passenger of the coach for supporting the students.

The students were demanding punishment to the persons responsible for beating up Abdur Razzak, a civil department student and fixing of reasonable bus for students on all routes from Rajshahi.

According to students and police, Razzak scuffled with the staff of a bus of

Paradise Enterprise on Saturday night as the conductor demanded 'excess' fare while he was traveling to Rajshahi from Rangpur.

As sequel to the scuffle, the bus conductor refused to drop Razzak in front of Ruet main gate. They took him to Rajshahi bus terminal and beat him up there mercilessly, alleged the students.

They claimed the bus workers also snatched away Tk 5000 and an expensive mobile phone from Razzak.

The next morning, the Ruet students, mostly from civil department, barricaded the highway in front of the Ruet main gate to protest the assault.

During the sit-in on the highway they damaged window panes of a coach with sticks and hurled brickbats at other vehicles.

As Quamrul Hasan, a passenger of the coach shouted at the bus driver for ignoring the students' demonstration, workers took him to the terminal and beat him up there.

A huge number of police forces were deployed at the scene as tension mounted at noon when bus workers started gathering at Talaimari to protest 'misbehavior' of students.

The students withdrew the barricade at 1:30pm after Ruet administration and senior police officials assured them of justice following a meeting with the bus owners and workers on the campus, said Tariqul Islam, an assistant commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police.

The students, however, threatened to go for tougher movement if their demands were not met within 24 hours.



Boy untraced for 14 days

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A madrasa student, who went missing along with Tk 85,000 from Islami Bank area in Cox's Bazar town 14 days ago, is yet to be traced.

Asif, son of Dubai expatriate Hafez Mahbubur Rahman of Dhechhuapalong village under Khuniapalong Union of Ramu upazila, is a student of Chakmarkul Dakhil Madrasa in the upazila.

On November 23 morning, Asif's mother Rabeya, 35, sent him with a cheque for Tk 85,000 to draw the amount from the local branch of Islami Bank for buying a sacrificial cow for Eid-ul Azha and to meet other family expenses.

As her husband has been staying in Dubai for the last one year, Rabeya used to draw money from the bank through her son.

Asif drew Tk 85,000 from the bank and informed her mother over cellphone that he was returning home with the money. But he did not return.

Rabeya filed a general diary (GD) with Cox's Bazar Police Station on December 3.



Locals agitate on the premises of the offices of deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in Gaibandha and form a human chain in the town yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of a few identified extortionists who brutally tortured a youth.

DC, SP offices besieged in Gaibandha demanding arrest of extortionists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A few hundred people yesterday besieged offices of the deputy commissioner and police superintendent in the town demanding immediate arrest and punishment of some local criminals.

Earlier they formed a human chain in front of the DC office.

At a rally there the speakers demanded punishment of the 'identified' criminals under speedy trial act.

They said, on November 5, criminals Rubel, Raihan, Mahfuz and Taposh of V-

aid Road demanded Tk. 20,000 illegal toll from local contractor Masud Rana.

Being refused, the criminals on the next day called out Masud from his house and took him to nearby Bangabazar areas. There they hacked Masud with Chinese axe and sword leaving him critically injured.

The victim was first admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. His right leg was amputated because of threat of gangrene.

Masud is still at Dhaka Medical

College Hospital and fighting for life, the speakers said.

Mother of the victim filed a case with Gaibandha police station, but none was arrested as yet, they alleged.

On the other hand, the criminal group is still threatening the victim's family with dire consequences if they did not withdraw the case, said the speakers.

The speakers included Abdul Hye, councilor, Gaibandha Pourashava, Anwar Hossain Chowdhury, Abdul Quddus and Kamal Mia.

82km gas pipeline 'risky'

PGCL stops giving fresh connection

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Around 82 kilometres gas pipeline from Baghabari of Sirajganj to Ishwardi of Pabna under Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited (PGCL) faces threat of explosion due to high pressure of gas.

The eight-inch diameter pipeline was designed to carry 4.5 million cubic feet per day (mmcf/d) gas but it usually supplies 5.5mmcf/d to 7mmcf/d during peak time which is very risky for the line, said the

authorities of PGCL, a company of Petrobangla.

On November 4, a four-member probe committee was formed to find out irregularities of the earlier completed project as well as risk factors of the pipeline.

The gas pipeline is getting thinner day by day due to internal sandblasting, Md Anisul Haque, PGCL general manager and member secretary of the probe committee, told The Daily Star over phone.

The probe committee has

collected some iron particles from the filter of a compressed natural gas (CNG) filling station in Ishwardi, which shows the signs of decay in the pipeline.

"Now we are not giving any commercial gas connection due to threat to the gas pipeline," said Md Ali Hossain, managing director of PGCL.

The gas transmission pipeline was set up in 2001 to ensure gas supply in Ishwardi Export Promotion Zone via Pabna at a cost of Tk 17 crore

without any long-term plan, PGCL sources said.

Meanwhile, 8.5 kilometre long gas pipeline from Tinmatha to Gakul in Bogra will face the risk damage if the PGCL authorities allow gas supply according to the requirement of BCL Paper Mill at Gakul. The pipeline, set up at a cost of Tk 2.50 crore, was designed to carry 3mmcf/d gas but the line will have to carry 4.5mmcf/d gas to meet the requirement of the paper mill.

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