

Reopen Chilahati to boost trade with 3 countries

Human chain in Nilphamari demands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A human chain was formed on Nilphamari-Saidpur road yesterday demanding reopening of Chilahati land port.

Organised by Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce and Industry, several hundred people from different professions joined the programme that lasted for an hour from 11:30am.

Local people and traders have raised the demand as Bangladesh Railway is considering reopening Chilahati-Holdibari (Kunchbihar) rail route to facilitate Nepal's external trade through Mongla Port.

Addressing a rally at the venue, the

speakers quoted sources and newspapers reports as saying that Bangladesh is desirous of allowing Nepal to do its external trade through sea ports. In that context, Bangladesh Railway (BR) is also working to find out the most convenient route for rail transit to Nepal via India as it (India) has responded positively. Chilahati-Holdibari rail transit route, which was closed in 1965, would be most suitable for this purpose, they said.

If the rail route is reopened, it will pave the way for reactivating the Chilahati land port, the speakers said.

They said Chilahati land port will also help boost trade with seven sisters of India alongside Nepal and Bhutan. The investors from Indian seven sisters and

also from Nepal and Bhutan will come forward to invest in Uttara Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Nilphamari district using this land port and Chilahati-Holdibari rail route, they added.

They also demanded immediate re opening of Darwani Textile Mills.

Chaired by Chamber President Abdul Wahed Sarker, the rally was addressed, among others, by Sadar Upazila Chairman Joinal Abedin, Domar Upazila Chairman Abdur Razzak Bosunia, Muktiyoddha Shangsad district unit President Fazul Haque, BMA local unit President Dr Momtazul Islam Mintu and Nilphamari Bar Association President advocate Abdul Wahed Chowdhury.



PHOTO: STAR

Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce and Industry and people from different professions form a human chain in the town yesterday demanding immediate steps to reactivate Chilahati land port.

Sylhet tea labourers protest 'grabbing' of union office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Over 200 tea garden labourers formed a human chain and held a rally in front of the Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar on Tuesday afternoon protesting alleged grabbing of the office of the central union of tea garden labourers.

Sylhet Bibhag Adivashi

Chhatra Sangathan president Mintu Deshwara chaired the rally while central president of the Cha Sramik Union-Makhan Lal Karmaker attended as chief guest. Cha Sramik Union, Sylhet valley president-Sribash Mohali, Tribal Welfare Association president Joseph Hawui and BSD's Ridesh Modi addressed the rally.

Among others, Sylhet district CPB president Bedananda Bhattacharya and Sylhet Paribesh Andolan secretary Abdul Karim Kim also spoke on the occasion.

The tea labour leaders alleged that a committee elected during the care taker government rule was holding its office at Srimangal. But, a local gang with the blessing of

some ruling party men captured the office illegally on November 25. The leaders vowed to launch a tougher agitation soon to get back the office.

The agitating workers later took out a procession in the city before handing over a memorandum, to the labour minister through the deputy commissioner of Sylhet.

In the memo, they demanded immediate steps to free the labour union office from the clutch of illegal occupants and return it back to the elected body. Otherwise, the workers would be compelled to go for a widespread agitation in the tea sector, they warned.

A group of people, allegedly backed by a section of local ruling party men, forcibly occupied the union office at Labour House at Srimangal on November 25.

According to sources, the tea sector has been witnessing unrest since a group of labour leaders, back by some ruling party people, forced the elected body out and occupied the labour union office. Protest rallies and agitation are taking place in the tea gardens in the whole greater Sylhet region almost everyday. Of the total 163 tea gardens, 140 are in the Sylhet region.

The central body of the tea labourers union was holding a meeting last night to announce their next course of action.



PHOTO: STAR

Tea garden labourers join a human chain in front of the Central Shaheed Minar in Sylhet city yesterday protesting grabbing of the office of central union of tea garden labourers at Srimangal.

Landless occupy lessee's land

Musclemen attack, injure SP as he visits spot

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A section of landless people have illegally occupied around 270 bighas of leased land at Norarchak in Debhata upazila, sparking tension among the local residents.

The landless people and a committee comprising representatives of local government bodies and lessee of the government land are now at loggerheads after landless people occupied the leased land on November 15, sources said.

The situation became tense as landless people wearing burial cloth offered Eid-ul-Azha prayers on the leased land on November 28 and vowed that they would not leave the land until their death.

Through a press conference at Satkhira Press Club on December 2, local people including the representatives of local government bodies, freedom fighters and elites formed a committee styled 'Muktijoddha Janata Sangram Parishad' to evict the landless people from the leased land.

They formed a 23-member committee with advocate Golam Mostafa as its convener and freedom fighter Mosharraf Hossain Mashu as member secretary.

In his written statement, Mashu said Dr Abu Yusuf Abdullah, a Dhaka University teacher, took lease of the government khas land to cultivate shrimp in 2006 and set up a farm named Bengal Scientific Shrimp Culture Ltd. Mashu alleged that a group

of people including Nazrul Islam, Sirajul Islam, Yad Ali, Golam Hossain and Amjad Hossain occupied the shrimp enclosure by using the banner of landless people.

The so-called landless people have built over 150 makeshift huts on the leased land and looted fish, cash and other valuables worth Tk 65 lakh from there, he said.

When contacted, Nazrul Islam, a leader of landless people, said, "We have occupied the khas land as the lessee violated the condition of the lease contract. We will not leave the land because we, the landless people, have rights to stay on the government's khas land."

Meanwhile, a group of musclemen yesterday assaulted the superintendent of police in Satkhira during his

visit to the spot.

Witnesses said the musclemen went to Norarchak at around 5:00pm while the SP went there at around 6:30pm and asked police to drive away the musclemen.

At this, Ali Hossain, Saju and other members of the gang hit SP Maniruzzaman in the head from behind while he was talking to some landless people, witnesses said.

He is now receiving treatment at the Shakhipur Hospital. The injured SP or the officer-in-charge of Debhata Police Station could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

The musclemen earlier had burnt around 15 makeshift houses of landless people and exploded 25 cocktills leaving 25 people injured.

Arms recovered from car seized 2 months ago

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police yesterday recovered two revolvers, 18 bullets and two bottles of phensidyl from a private car seized on October 8 this year in the city.

OC Monirul Gias of Khulna Sadar Police Station said they seized the firearms and ammunition following a tip at 2:30pm. These were found hidden underneath the driver's seat, he added.

The private car has been lying in an open space of Khulna Sadar Police compound since it was seized.

Police stopped the car near Mollapota police box in the city at 11:30pm on October 8 and found 15 bottles of phensidyl in it. They later seized the car, which belongs to one Abu Bakar Siddique of East Jurain in the capital, and took it to Sadar Police Station.

Jahangir Alam, who was driving the car from Dhaka to Khulna, was arrested and sent to jail by a court on October 9. He came out of Khulna District Jail on bail on October 15, police said.

ASI monir Ahmed filed a case with Sadar Police Station after the car was seized with phensidyl. Four people, including Jahangir Alam, were named as accused in the case. Three other accused Shamim, Rony and Shabu, who were named by Jahangir as drug traffickers, are yet to be arrested.

PILKHANA CARNAGE

Bail prayer of 31 BDR men rejected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Dinajpur court yesterday rejected the bail prayer of 31 BDR men of Dinajpur sector and Rattalion-2 arrested on charge of involvement in BDR mutiny on February 25 and 26. Fixing the date for next hearing, the court asked the investigation committee to submit the report within February 23, 2010.

Earlier, the 31 BDR men -- 14 from Dinajpur sector and 17 from Dinajpur 2 Battalion were produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court amid tight security.

KM Rasheduzzaman Raza, after the hearing, rejected the bail prayer of the BDR men and fixed the next date on February 23 next year.

According to sources, the OC of Dinajpur Police Station filed a case accusing the 31 BDR men of Dinajpur sector and Dinajpur 2 Battalion of their involvement in the BDR mutiny in February.

ACC sues Ctg businessman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against a businessman on charge of concealing information in the wealth report earlier submitted to the commission.

Assistant Director Jalal Uddin of the ACC, Chittagong-1 filed the case with Double Mooring Police Station against Nurul Haq of the city's Chandgaon Residential Area.

In the case statement, the complainant stated that Nurul Haq amassed properties worth

Tk 85.09 lakh illegally and concealed information about the wealth in the report.



PHOTO: RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI

Different organisations and firms paste posters on the walls of incomplete memorial for the martyrs of Liberation War in Moulvibazar town. Construction of the memorial on the mass grave started during the tenure of last Awami League government but it stopped after the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance came to power.

Mymensingh, Madaripur break the shackles on this day

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Mymensingh and Madaripur districts were freed from the Pakistani occupation forces on this day in 1971.

Our Mymensingh Correspondent reports: People of Mymensingh will celebrate today as a red-letter day marking liberation of the district from the occupation of Pakistani army.

After the crackdown on March 26 in 1971, the Pak army made several failed attempts to enter Mymensingh town.

On April 17 in 1971, a fierce battle started between Pak army and the freedom fighters at Kalihati in Tangail.

Equipped with sophisticated weapons, the Pak army set their foot on Mymensingh town on April 22.

Between May and November in 1971, the freedom fighters and the occupation army locked in a number of encounters at different places of the district, causing huge casualties to both sides.

On December 7, freedom fighters freed Haluaghat from the occupation army and Phulpur and Bhaluka upazilas on December 8.

Liberation of Gouripur, Trishal, Ishwarganj and Tarakanda areas followed.



PHOTO: STAR

This magnificent monument on the bank of Brahmaputra River in Mymensingh town was set up in 2000 in memory of the valiant freedom fighters.

On December 10, freedom fighters led by Principal Motiur Rahman MP and Indian allied forces freed Mymensingh town from the Pak army.

Some 125 freedom fighters including students and cultural activists borrowed martyrdom here.

In 2000, local Muktiyoddha Sangsad built a 64-feet high Muktiyoddha Smiriti Soudha on the bank of Brahmaputra River in the town, depicting all the movements related to the country's independence.

Different political and

socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to pay tribute to the valiant freedom fighters today.

A week-long programme has also been taken at Chhoto Bazar in the district town to celebrate liberation of Mymensingh and Victory Day.

A Correspondent reports from Madaripur: Madaripur district was freed from the occupation of Pakistani forces on this day in 1971.

Inspired by Bangabandhu's March 7 speech, local youths started arms training at Nazimuddin College ground in Madaripur and Joy Bangla Bahini was formed there on March 10.

The then sub-divisional officer Syed Rejaul Hayat arranged arms and ammunition for the freedom fighters from the treasury.

Pakistani occupation forces aided by their collaborators entered Madaripur on April 24, 1971.

They killed a number of people including men, women and children and burnt thousands of houses.

Freedom fighters also formed strong resistance against the occupation forces.

After a three-day fight at Samaddar Bridge area on December 8, 9 and 10, the enemy was finally defeated and Madaripur district was declared free.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

UNCONCERNED EVEN AFTER QUITE A FEW SERIOUS ACCIDENTS: Vessels including ferryboats continue overloading during their ply on risky routes. The photo was taken from Karnaphuli ferry terminal in Chittagong yesterday.