

Fresh unrest at coalmine

Demonstration demanding profit bonus

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Bangladeshi miners in Barapukuria Coal Mine Company Ltd (BCMCL) yesterday staged a demonstration demanding profit bonus as pledged by the authorities concerned last year.

Around 1,100 miners took out a procession in the coal mine area in the morning and later submitted a memorandum to the managing director of BCMCL.

As BCMCL Managing Director Engineer Md Quamruzzaman was in Dhaka, his personal assistant Golam Mostafa received the memorandum from Robiul Islam Robi, president of Miners and Workers Union.

The miners went on an indefinite strike on February 1 last year demanding profit bonus as the BCMCL authorities gave profit bonus for 2009-10 fiscal year to the officials and employees.

The then deputy commissioner of Dinajpur Md Abdul Jalil sat with the miners on February 3 where the BCMCL authorities pledged to pay Tk 4,500 to each of the miners as profit bonus. On assurance of the authorities concerned, the miners called off the strike and joined their duties on the day.

Miners and Workers Union President Md Robiul Islam Robi said since the BCMCL authori-

ties did not meet the commitment, the miners have started fresh agitation to press home their demand for profit bonus.

Miners' demand is genuine as they are directly involved in coal extraction, Robi said.

The union leader demanded immediate payment of profit bonus for 2009-10 and 2010-11 fiscal years. Otherwise, he threatened to launch a greater agitation programme.

Troublesome sawmill triggers protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushtia

Students and teachers of Mothurapur High School in Daulatpur upazila of the district have demanded that the local administration remove the sawmill set up beside the school by an influential person recently, hampering academic atmosphere.

They took out a procession and then formed a human chain at the upazila headquarters on Thursday

to press for the demand. Villagers of Mothurapur also joined the programme.

Sources said the sawmill, which is run by shallow engine, was set up by Samajul Islam beside Mothurapur High School and a kindergarten named Green Child International School.

Teachers of Mothurapur High School alleged the sawmill makes a rattling sound, causing disturbance to the teachers and students of both the insti-

tutions. "We repeatedly requested Samajul Islam not to run the mill during school hours, but to no effect," they said.

The managing committee of Mothurapur High School also submitted written complaints to Daulatpur Police Station and local forest office. But their efforts yielded no positive results.

Contacted, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal said he will try to settle the issue amicably.

Outlaw killed in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pabna

A top leader of an outlawed party was killed by rivals and his body was recovered at Madhupur village under Ataikula PS in Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

Police recovered the body of Mobarak Hossain, 30, regional leader of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (ML Janajuddhya faction) and son of Azhar Ali of the village, from near a graveyard.

Police said locals found the body bearing marks of injury and informed them at about 9:30am.

Police said Mobarak might have been killed by the members of his rival group. He was wanted in several cases, including two for murder, they said.

Cracks in dyke create panic

UNB, Sakhira

People of Shyamnagar upazila are worried as an embankment of Water Development Board near Harinagar bazar here has developed cracks.

The cracks developed at around 11 am Saturday due to rise of water level in the Chunkuri river, villagers said.

At least 10 villages including Harinagar, Tengrakhal, Hetalkhali, Kalinchi, Bhetkhali, Munshiganj village will be flooded if the embankment collapses, they said.



INSOLENCE UNFORGIVABLE: The entrance to the Shaheed Minar near the railway station in Bogra town lies covered in garbage even yesterday, the day before the Shaheed Dibash dedicated to the memory of the Language Movement martyrs.

Indigenous kids yet to have textbooks in mother tongue

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Absence of textbooks in mother languages and lack of teachers from own communities hamper schooling of indigenous children in Chapainawabganj district.

Failing to follow the classroom instructions and textbooks in Bangla, eight-year-old Sumitra Maddi of Jugidaying village in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila dropped out of school last year.

"This incident reflects the hard reality faced by the indigenous children in different areas of the district," said Laxman Kole, a resident of a cluster village under Amnura union of Sadar upazila, and a teacher of a primary school meant for indigenous children.

Most of the indigenous children of different villages in Sadar, Gomostapur and Nachole upazilas in Chapainawabganj district have hardly any scope to use their mother tongue outside their community. At school they learn Bangla and English but not their mother language. Language barrier affects their learning as well as relationship with Bangla speaking students.

Local people established Atahar Shishu Shikkha School in Sadar upazila for indigenous children with the help of non-government organisation Caritas last year. Now 50 children from play group to class two read there. Douloti

Murmu and Milon Saren teach them.

Beauty Maddi, Dilip Hemrom and Rajina Soren of class one and Sumitra Maddi, Smitara Tudu and Sanjit Hemrom of class two in Atahar Shishu Shikkha School, are lucky enough to receive lessons in mother tongue as their teachers belong to indigenous Santal community. However, they are far from getting a smooth learning atmosphere as textbooks are in Bangla and English.

Condition of most other indigenous learners in the district is worse as they have to learn with Bangla speaking teachers.

"Only a few of the Santal indigenous children of Jugidaying, Jamipara and Boupara areas under Jhilim union of Sadar upazila understand Bangla language," Douloti Murmu.

"Indigenous children are deprived, as there is a lack of textbooks in mother languages. Our Santali language is being taught with the help of Roman alphabet, but there are no books in Santali language," said Milon Saren.

During a visit to a government primary school at Atahar village that also comprises Jugidaying, an area inhabited by indigenous Santal community, on Tuesday, this correspondent saw that the indigenous children did not understand Bangla which is the medium of education there.

Shaym Tudu, an indigenous leader of Jalahar village in Sadar upazila, said,

many indigenous children drop out of primary school every year mainly due to lack of textbooks in indigenous languages.

According to indigenous leaders in Chapainawabganj, at least 25,000 indigenous people belonging to Santal, Kole, Oraon, Mahato and Rajbangshi and a few other small indigenous communities live in the district. The Santals are the largest community among them.

"The government should take initiative for providing primary education in mother languages of indigenous people to encourage our children to attend school," said Anil Marandi, president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, central committee.

"We have failed to bring all indigenous children to primary schools," said Rafiqul Islam, assistant monitoring officer of district primary education office.

The government's education policy emphasises introduction of indigenous people's languages as medium of instruction for their children at the primary level in line with the target to ensure basic education for all by 2015.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the United Nations charter that gives all communities of the world the right to receive education in their mother language.

A bill ratifying the charter was passed in parliament in 1997, but the law is yet to see full implementation in case of indigenous people.



A saw mill set just beside Mothurapur High School in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia district causes disturbance to learners.

Good price inspires onion farmers

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The farmers of the district have brought more lands under onion cultivation this year because of good market price of the vegetable.

This year, that price of per maund onion is Tk 800 to 900 while the last year's price was around Tk 700

District Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources said a total of 33,983 hectares of land in nine upazilas of the district have been brought under onion cultivation, setting 3 lakh tonnes production target.

Last year, the farmers produced 2.8 lakh tonnes of onion on 33,000 hectares of land in the upazilas, AED

sources added.

Santhia and Sujanagar upazilas are the highest onion producing areas of the country. Farmers have cultivated onion on 12,500 hectares of land in Sujanagar upazila and on 11,700 hectares of land in Santhia upazila, the sources further said.

In the seven other upazilas, onion has been cultivated on 3,750 hectares of land in Pabna Sadar, 881 hectares of land in Ishwardi, 1210 hectares of land in Atghoria, 860 hectares of land in Chatmohar, 272 hectares in Vangura, 760 hectares in Faridpur and 2050 hectares of land in Bera.

While visiting upazilas, this correspondent found the farmers still sow-

ing onion seeds in many areas and collecting onion (locally called 'mulkata piaz') sown earlier.

In November and December last year, farmers planted mulkata piaz (onion) on about 6,000 hectares of land that produced about 57,312 tonnes.

Omar Ali Sheikh, a farmer of Manikhat village in Sujanagar upazila said "Good market price has inspired us to cultivate onion. We spend Tk 6,000 to 7,000 on each bigha of land and earn Tk 12,000 to 15,000 out of it."

Md Shahin, an official of Agriculture Extension Department, said "Weather condition was so far favourable for onion farming. We are expecting a high yield of onion this year".



Women workers collect early variety onion, locally known as mulkata piaz, at a field of Khairash village in Chatmohar upazila under Pabna district.

অমর

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