

SYLHET-MEGHALAYA BORDERS

# Officials soon to visit disputed points to assess Indian claims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A survey team and officials from BGB and land administration will soon visit the Sylhet-Meghalaya borders where the joint survey by the officials of both sides had to be suspended a few weeks ago.

Contacted, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (revenue) Shamim Al Razi, also the co-ordinator of the regional survey team, told this correspondent yesterday a team from the Directorate of Survey will visit the adversely possessed lands on the borders to assess the Indian claims. The BGB and land officials will visit the borders along with the survey team, he added.

The stalemate in joint survey has been prevailing for weeks as we could not agree with the Indians over survey points on the adversely possessed lands on different borders in the

region. Accordingly we, the regional survey team, informed the higher authority of the matter and sought guidelines, the ADC said.

Sources said the Indians were pressing to start survey from different points without any supporting documents and ignoring the existing border pillars set in 1947.

Survey on the Sylhet-Meghalaya borders could not be resumed even weeks after the schedule set by the officials of both sides. The survey officials had to suspend the job in December last year following a trouble created by the Indian Khasias and others on Padua-Protappur borders. The survey was again suspended on 5 April as the Indians failed to bring documents in support of their claim for lands inside the Bangladesh territory.

After repeated incidents of killing of Bangladeshis by the BSF personnel, intrusion by

Indian Khasia tribesmen for paddy, the both sides decided to conduct a joint survey on Zaintapur, Gowainghat and Kanaighat borders.

Accordingly, the survey began on December 7 last year. But it had to be suspended after the December 14 incident when about 500 armed Indians backed by the BSF intruded into Bangladesh territory and occupied some lands on Padua border. However, they retreated in the face of chase by thousands of villagers.

As the survey resumed April 5 on Dibir haor on Padua borders, the Indians claimed 55.3 acres of land on Dibir haor and 320 acres of land on Padua borders. But they failed to produce documents in support of their claims.

The Indian Khasia tribesmen have been opposing the survey on Dibir haor border in Jaintapur upazila, claiming 55 acres of Bangladesh land as of own.

# Road blockade in Khagrachhari

Settlers to submit memo to PM today demanding probe into violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad (PBCP) yesterday enforced a daylong road blockade programme in the district protesting recent violence in Ramgarh and Manikchhari upazilas and demanding punishment to the persons responsible.

Three people were killed, 20 injured and many houses burnt in two upazilas of the district on April 17 over land dispute between indigenous people and Bangalee settlers.

During the blockade, movements of vehicles on different roads in the district remained suspended. PBCP activists took out processions in Khagrachhari town and burnt tyres on roads.

PBCP Central Committee President Alamgir Kabir told this correspondent over cellphone that the blocked programme was peacefully.

He said they will submit a memorandum to the prime minister through Khagrachhari deputy commissioner today demanding



PHOTO: STAR

Activists of Parbatya Bangali Chhatra Parishad burn tyres in College Gate area of Khagrachhari town during their daylong road blockade yesterday in protest against the recent violence in Ramgarh upazila of the district.

proper investigation into April 17 incident and punishment to the persons responsible.

After the incident, a three-member committee,

headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Mohammad Salahuddin, was formed to investigate the incident. The

committee is expected to submit its report on Wednesday.

Salahuddin said the committee has completed recording statements of 26

witnesses to the incidence.

The district administration has so far listed 94 families who fell victim to the violence in Ramgarh and Manikchhari on April 17.

# Trees felled to 'widen road'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) has sold 47 trees in Pabna town beside the Dhaka-Pabna highway for Tk 55 thousand to widen the road from Gaspara to Terminal point of the district headquarter.

But the actual value of the trees would be much higher as most of them are 10 to 12 years old, said forest department sources and locals.

Although seven of the trees sold by the RHD belonged to forest department, no approval was taken from the forest department when the tender was called, said Ajit Kumar Rudra, divisional forest officer of Pabna.

"It is ridiculous that 47 trees have been sold for Tk 55 thousand. As per rule, forest department officials are to be included in the tender committee for selling trees. The forest department estimates the price of trees. But this time the RHD did not inform us anything and completed the tender from Rajshahi," he added.

During a visit to Mojahidclub area of the town yesterday morning, this correspondent found



PHOTO: STAR

Workers fell a koroi tree beside Shibrampur Government Primary School in Pabna town yesterday as the Roads and Highways Department recently sold 47 such trees, claiming that it was needed to widen an important road in the district headquarters.

nine large koroi trees felled down beside the road.

As the RHD sold 47 trees from Gaspara to Terminal area in Pabna town, the contractors of Rajshahi recently received the work order and started cutting the trees last week. Fifteen of the trees have already been felled.

Md Khaled Shahed, the executive engineer of RHD, Pabna, said the trees have been sold as the Dhaka-

Pabna highway from Gaspara to Pabna Edward College in the middle of the district town will be widened by 10 feet on both sides.

Refuting the allegation violating rule in the tender process, RHD Executive Engineer Md Khaled Shahed said, "We called the tender and estimated the value of the trees in proper way through the forest wing of RHD."

# Indefinite transport strike begins in Panchagarh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Panchagarh district transport owners' association and three transport workers' unions yesterday jointly started an indefinite strike in Panchagarh district, protesting torching of a bus in Tentulia upazila on Saturday afternoon.

Buses remained off the road in Panchagarh while buses from other districts including Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna were resisted by the workers, causing untold suffering to the commuters on the routes.

A joint meeting of Panchagarh district transport owners' association and three transport workers' unions, held on Saturday night in Panchagarh, decided to continue strike on all routes of the district until the culprits who torched the bus were brought to book.

Sources said, a rock

trader was killed in a road accident on Panchagarh-Tentulia Road at Magurmari intersection under Tentulia upazila of Panchagarh on Saturday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Tariqul Islam, 35, son of Abdul Kader of Debnagar village under the same upazila.

Sub-Inspector of Tentulia police station Mohammad Salaududdin told this correspondent over cell phone that at around 1:30 pm a Panchagarh-bound passenger bus crushed the rock trader under its wheels while he was coming from opposite direction.

Agitated locals set fire to the bus after the incident and barricaded the road for three hours till 4:30pm.

During the barricade, many vehicles were stranded on both side of the road causing sufferings to the passengers, he added.

# 50 injured as rival land grabbers lock in clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

At least 50 people, including four policemen, were injured in a clash between two rival groups of the ruling Awami League over grabbing land of Mora Kumar River at Fultola Bazar under Rajoir upazila of Madaripur district yesterday morning.

Both sides used spears and long sticks and hurled bombs at each other during the clash that continued for three hours.

People of Majhkandi, Srikrishnadi, Uttar Sharistabad and Norer Kanda on the northern side of Fultola Bazar sided with Paikpara union parishad Chairman Shahjahan Mollah while those of Char Kanda, Naya Kanda, Basudevpur and Bairagi Bazar on the southern side of the Bazar joined Munna group.

Police, Rab and riot police rushed to the spot and fired blank shots and tear gas shells to disperse the clashing groups.

As the situation was getting worse, Deputy Commission Shashi Kumar Singha, Police Superintendent Sarder Tamijuddin, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Rezaul Kabir, Officer-in-Charge of Rajoir Police Station Md Mashiur Rahman and local Awami League leaders came to the spot and brought the situation under control.

The injured were admitted to Rajoir Heath Complex, different hospitals and clinics. Injured police Sub-Inspector Anwar Hossain and constables Abul Hossain, Kazi Mokshed and Haider Ali Sareja were also admitted to the health complex.

Local sources said yesterday's clash was a

sequel to an attack on UP Chairman Shahjahan Mollah by Munna group at Fultola Bazar on Thursday evening. Immediately after incident, supporters of Munna and Shahjahan Mollah locked in a clash that left at least 20 people from both sides injured.

Police fired blank shots, dispersed the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

Deputy commissioner Shashi Kumar Singha told this correspondent over telephone that the clash ensued over establishing supremacy at Fultola Bazar and its adjoining areas, land related feuds and construction of illegal structures on a leased land.

Local administration will soon demolish the illegal structures on the land, the DC added.

Locals said War injured freedom fighter Noor Mohammad Minshi took lease 2.15 acres of land from the government near the river 11 years ago. Recently, Munna built some structures, encroaching upon the river and on a [portion of the leased land.

Following a complaint against Munna for building structures, grabbing the river land and the leased one, the deputy commissioner issued an order, asking the local administration to take necessary action against the grabber.

UP Chairman Shahjahan came under attack by Munna group on Thursday as he supported Noor Mohammad. Munna's men also ransacked Noor Mohammad's house during Thursday clash.



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