

TRADERS, COMMUTERS SUFFER

Indefinite transport strike begins in Rajshahi division

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Transport workers enforced an indefinite strike in Rajshahi division yesterday to press home their 10-point demand.

The demands include immediate issuance of appointment letters to the transport workers, enhancement of monthly salary, issuance of driving licence on easy terms, ban on plying of Nasimon and Karimon on highways, removal of roadside markets, and an end to harassment in the name of police checking on the roads and highways.

The strike caused untold sufferings to traders and common people as road communications with other parts of the country have been snapped.

Mango traders could not send their produce to Dhaka and other parts of the country from Rajshahi as trucks stayed off the roads. Many people for emergency journey to different districts rushed to Rajshahi Railway



Rajshahi railway station sees unusual crowd of passengers as road transport workers start an indefinite strike in Rajshahi division yesterday to press for their 10-point demand, including salary increase.

Station for tickets.

Jesmin Begum of Seroil Colony in the city had to hire a microbus as she could not get train tickets for taking her sick father to Dhaka for better treat-

ment.

Inter-district bus passengers returned home while some of them had to hire CNG, human haulers, paying higher fares.

Abdul Latif, president of

Rajshahi Regional Committee of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation, said they will continue strike in all eight districts of the division until the demands are met.

PHOTO: STAR

SNIPPETS

Extortionists hurl bombs at shop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Extortionists hurled bombs at a shop in Meherpur town on Sunday night as the shop owner refused to pay heed to their demand. According to police, a gang of extortionists demanded Tk 2 lakh from Zohurul Islam, owner of Zohurul Enterprise, in the town on June 25. As he refused to oblige, two members of the gang came to the area at around 7:30pm on Sunday, riding a motorcycle. They hurled two bombs, targeting the shop and left the scene. Zohurul and an employee were at the shop, but escaped unhurt. Protesting the attack, traders put up barricade on Meherpur-Kushtia and meherpur-Chuadanga roads at around 8:00pm. They withdrew the barricades at 9:00pm as police assured them of arresting the criminals. Zohurul filed a general dairy with Meherpur Sadar Police Station the same night.

3 Indian nationals held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Three Indian nationals were arrested at Amtala Kazipara bordering village under Sadar upazila in Panchagarh on Monday afternoon on charge of entering Bangladesh without passports. The arrestees were identified as Akbar Ali, 35, Safiqul Islam, 32, and Joriful Haque, 34, of Dinajpur district under the Indian state Paschimchanga. Acting on a tip-off, a DB police team led by Sub-Inspector Nur-un-Nabi conducted a drive at the village and arrested the three Indian nationals from a house at around 3:00pm.

Coastguards rescue 10 fishermen from robbers' den

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

Coastguards rescued 10 fishermen, busting a den of robbers at Kalam Char under Manpura upazila of the district Sunday afternoon.

A gang of robbers abducted the fishermen along with two trawlers from the river Meghna on Saturday night.

Acting on a tip-off, coastguards raided the den of the gang at Kalam Char at 5:00pm. Sensing the presence of the coastguards, the robbers opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate.

Lieutenant Rakibul Hasan, operation officer of the coastguard (south zone), said both sides traded at least 50 gunshots during the gunfight.

As the gang retreated,

coastguard members rescued 10 fishermen from there.

They are Helal, 35, Taslim, 32, Jasim, 22, Kalam Patwary, 28, Monir, 30, Firoj, 34, Aziz, 33, Mohiuddin, 22, Nur Alam, 31, and Jasim Uddin, 34. They all are from Hajirhat union under Monpura upazila.

Meanwhile, two fishermen, abducted by robbers from Char Jahiruddin area under Borhanuddin upazila on Friday, were released on the following day.

The gang kidnapped the two fishermen from Char Jahiruddin area in the river Meghna for ransom. According to trawler owner Kabir Dalal, the robbers released the two fishermen after getting money from their families.

RULES VIOLATION

Gazipur BNP agent files complaints

A CORRESPONDENT

Advocate Siddiqur Rahman, an electoral agent of BNP-backed mayoral candidate for the upcoming Gazipur city poll MA Mannan, lodged two separate complaints with the Returning Officer yesterday.

In the first complaint, he named at least 81 presiding officers and claimed they were linked with the ruling party politics.

In the second, he alleged that supporters of Awami League-backed candidate Ajmat Ullah Khan distributed leaflets slandering MA Mannan, which was a violation of the electoral code of conducts.

The leaflets allegedly highlighted some personal issues involving Mannan, including the Hajj scam in 1993 during his tenure as the state minister for religion.

Siddiqur demanded stern action against the discrepancies.

Returning Officer Matiar Rahman ordered the Joydevpur Police Station officer-in-charge to probe the matter in response to the first complaint.

Meanwhile, sources said that he issued a letter to Mannan yesterday evening asking him to identify the political designations of the persons alleged of distributing the leaflets and the organizations they belonged to.

Matiar said, "We will take proper action after scrutinizing the allegations."

Farmer killed over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Brutally tortured by men of a neighbour at Shahjadpur village in Melandah municipality under the district on Saturday morning, a farmer succumbed to his injuries at Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital (MMCH) on Sunday evening.

The deceased is Antaj Ali, 40, son of Bahaj Uddin of the village.

There was a longstanding feud between Antaj and his next door neighbour Abu Bakkar over demarcation of their house boundaries, said police and locals.

They locked in an altercation over the matter at 8:30am on Saturday.

At one stage men of Bakkar mercilessly beat up Antaj with lethal weapons, leaving him seriously injured, police said.

He was sent to MMCH where he died on Sunday evening.

After autopsy at the hospital morgue, the body was sent to the victim's home yesterday afternoon, said Billal Uddin, officer in charge (OC) of Melandah police station.

The victim's wife Piyala Begum filed a murder case with the police station accusing Abu Bakkar and a few others, the OC said.

Four get life for murder in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Netrakona Additional District and Sessions Judge Md Abdul Hamid yesterday sentenced four people to life term imprisonment for killing a man in 2000.

The convicts -- Amir Hossen, Komir Hossen, Harun-ur-Rasid and Jamir Hossen of Kapasia village in Kendua upazila under Netrakona district were also fined Tk 20 thousand each, in default to serve two years more in jail.

On April 18 in 2000, the convicts killed Abdul Goni, 70, with sharp weapons in front of the victim's house following a clash over a disputed land, goes the prosecution.

A murder case was filed with Kendua Police Station in this connection.

After examining the witnesses and evidence, the judge found the four people guilty and pronounced the verdict.

BY-POLL IN KISHOREGANJ-4 JS SEAT TOMORROW Both AL, rebel candidates hopeful of win

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Two candidates in Kishoreganj-4 by-election scheduled for tomorrow remained busy in their last moment publicity yesterday as the poll campaign ended last night.

Ruling Awami League (AL)-backed candidate Rejwan Ahmed Toufiq, also the eldest son of President Abdul Hamid, is contesting with 'boat' symbol while his opponent 'rebel' party candidate Syed Mahitul Islam Asim, is vying as an independent candidate with 'football' symbol.

Asim is publicity secretary of Astagram upazila unit of AL. Both the candidates made different pledges for development of the area if elected.

Rejwan Ahmed Toufiq's father Abdul Hamid was elected lawmaker from the area seven times, became



Rejwan Ahmed Toufiq

deputy speaker and then speaker of parliament and lately president of the country.

Like Abdul Hamid, his son Toufiq has a clean image to the locals and it keeps him in an advantageous position.

Syed Mahitul Islam Asim seems to benefit from boycotting the by-poll by main opposition BNP.

Asim expressed hope that people will elect him to bring a change in the 'traditional' local leadership and



Syed Mahitul Islam Asim

make it a pro-people one.

The seat in Kishoreganj-4 constituency fell vacant as the lawmaker from the constituency Abdul Hamid, also the then speaker, was elected president of the country on April 22.

The Election Commission on May 22 declared the election schedule for the by-election to the constituency that comprises 24 unions under Itna, Mithamoin and Astagram upazilas with 2,79,719 voters.

Student nurses on hunger strike to press 6-pt demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Students of Rangpur Government Nursing College and Mymensingh Nursing College went on an indefinite hunger strike yesterday to realise their six-point demand.

The demands include introduction of six to 12 months internship after completion of four-year BSc in nursing, fixing the monthly stipend at Tk 3,000 for each student and allowing student nurses to wear

aprons during clinical practice.

Our Rangpur correspondent reported that students of Rangpur Government Nursing College started hunger strike on the premises of the academic building at 11:00am.

Addressing a rally at the venue, Rafiqul Islam, convener of the nursing college Sangram Parishad, said they began hunger strike as the authorities concerned didn't pay heed to their demands despite several agitation programmes held in differ-

ent nursing colleges recently.

Joyanti Rani Bose, a leader of the parishad, said they will continue the hunger strike until the demands are met. Mostafa Monwar, joint convener of Nursing College Sangram Parishad, parishad members Nurunnabi Sarker and Shamima Akhtar also spoke.

Students of Mymensingh Nursing College also began an indefinite hunger strike yesterday to press the same demands, reports UNB.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Rangpur Nursing College start a fast unto death programme yesterday to press for their six-point demand.

Tribunal irked

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him, not on the witnesses, who had given deposition against him.

Obediently the directive, the war crimes accused said he would take one more hour to complete his deposition.

When the war crimes accused began speaking about the prosecution witnesses' testimony against him, prosecutor Zead Al Malum drew the attention of the tribunal. What SQ Chowdhury was saying was a matter of argument, not a matter of testimony, Malum argued.

Justice ATM Fazle Kabir, chairman of the three-member tribunal, told the accused that the law forbade a witness from mentioning other witnesses' testimony during deposition.

"It is a matter of argument. Your lawyer will point it out at a later stage," Justice Kabir said.

At this stage, SQ Chowdhury sought guidelines from the tribunal as to what he would say.

The tribunal gave him a guideline which the war crimes accused promised to follow today, saying he would complete his deposition within an hour.

In a bid to prove his plea of alibi, the war crimes accused yesterday gave a description of his whereabouts during the Liberation War in 1971.

SQ Chowdhury claimed he had left Dhaka in the afternoon on March 29, 1971 for Karachi with the help of his cousin Qayam Reza Chowdhury and the

then PIA's district manager Hamid Jung.

He had spent three weeks at the family home of the Haroon brothers, who owned the Dawn Group of Publications, in Karachi.

The war crimes accused further claimed he had socialised with some friends from Dhaka, including Salman F Rahman, Nizam Ahmed and Qayam Reza Chowdhury, who took shelter in Karachi in April 1971.

SQ Chowdhury said he had managed to get transfer papers from Dhaka University with the help of Osman Siddique, son of the then DU vice-chancellor, and enrolled at Punjab University in political science.

The war crimes accused added he had met his college friend Shamim Hasnain, who is now a High Court judge. According to SQ Chowdhury, Justice Shamim Hasnain joined Punjab University in May 1971.

"In the months of June, July and August, I was restricted to Lahore as my final examinations were in August... both Mr Hasnain and myself found ourselves spending a lot of time at the university library," he said.

"At the end of our examinations in August 1971, a group of friends, including Ishaq Khan Khakwani, Riaz Noon, Naeem Akhoond, Salman Rahman, Siddique Khan Kanju, Muneeb Arjumand Khan and I went off to Murree and spent

about three weeks in the mountainous region of the northern areas, including the Kaghan Valley," he said.

He added his father Fazlul Quader Chowdhury came to Lahore possibly on October 8, 1971 to see him. "That was the last time I saw my father," he said.

The war crimes accused said he along with others had begun driving to London from Pakistan through Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Holland and France on October 12, 1971 and reached their destination after a month.

The proceedings of the case are adjourned until today.

AKM YUSUF CASE TRANSFERRED

Tribunal-1 yesterday transferred the war crimes case against the founder of Razakar force AKM Yusuf to International Crimes Tribunal-2.

Tribunal-1 took the decision following a petition by the prosecution.

Prosecutor Syed Haidar Ali appealed to the tribunal to transfer the case for its quick disposal, saying Tribunal-1 was burdened with cases.

Opposing the prayer, defence counsel Tajul Islam said it would be difficult for conducting lawyer Mizanul Islam to move to Tribunal-2 on a wheelchair.

Giving the transfer order, Tribunal-1 also directed a transfer of all documents to Tribunal-2.