

BURIMARI LAND PORT

Indian truckers made to pay illegal toll

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Illegal toll collection from the Indian trucks continues unabated at Burimari land port in Patgram upazila under the district, thanks to the lax vigilance by the customs officials, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and police.

"The organised gang compel us to pay Tk 200 to 300 as illegal toll in the name of labourers' welfare fund at Burimari land port," said Narayan Chandra Das, 52, a driver from Cooch Behar district in India.

"If we don't want to pay illegal toll, we face harassment and our vehicle goes into the risk," said another driver Tepantor Nath Singh from Jolpiguri in India.

"If we do not give toll

money as per their demand, the labourers refuse to unload the goods from the truck," said truck helper Narendra Sen from Mathabhangha thana in Kuchbihar district.

On behalf of the gang, labourers' sarder (leader) Jobed Ali moves around with a bag and collects illegal toll from 150 to 200 vehicles coming to the land port from India daily, said several transport workers and locals at Burimari land port.

Asked about the matter, Jobed Ali said, "I never charge any toll money from the drivers. I just request them to give a small amount for the labourers' welfare fund. Most of the fund collected by me is spent for the welfare of labourers

working at the land port. Customs officials, BGB, police, and even cadres get share of the fund."

Safar Uddin, president of loading and unloading labourers' association at Burimari land port, said the organisation spends Tk 8 to 10 thousand for the welfare of labourers at the land port daily.

"Sometimes we spend huge amount if any labourer faces accident. The fund for labourer welfare comes from Indian drivers and traders' donation," he added.

On the other hand, Afzal Hossain, a labourer at the land port, alleged that general labourers never get anything from the welfare fund of the association and the collected money is

pocketed by some labourer leaders and others.

"Labourer leaders collect large amount of money in the name of labourers' welfare fund but there is no account in this name," said another labourer Masjidul Islam.

Contacted, Patgram Police Station officer in charge Amiruzzaman and Burimari BGB camp commander Abdul Hamid said they are unaware about the matter.

Sohel Rana, assistant commissioner of Customs at Burimari land port, said, "I have heard the matter but I did not get any written complaint in this connection. With the help of law enforcers, I will try to stop illegal toll collection from Indian vehicles in the land port area."



PHOTO: STAR

A man (marked X), engaged by the leader of a so-called labourers' association, demands illegal toll from an Indian truck driver at Burimari land port a couple of days ago.

ASSAULT ON FELLOWS BY PATIENT'S RELATIVES

Interns at MMCH on strike

Rally in town protesting attack on 4 journos by the interns

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Interns at Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital (MMCH) went on an indefinite strike on Tuesday night, demanding immediate arrest of the relatives of a female patient who attacked on their fellows.

Meanwhile, journalists held a rally in front of Mymensingh Press Club yesterday, protesting the attack on their fellows by the interns the same night.

Four newsmen of Hossain Shaheed of Channel 24, Kazi Mustafa Munna of Gazi TV, Ripon Goala of Channel 9 and Aatur Rahman Jewel of Ekushey TV came under attack around 10:00pm on Tuesday when they went to the hospital to cover a news over the death of the patient.

Hailing from Gulpukurpar area in the town, Aysha Khanam, an ovarian cancer patient, died on Tuesday night

hours after she was admitted to the hospital as the doctors did not attend her properly, said the speakers at the rally, quoting the relatives of the deceased.

When the journalists reached the spot the unruly intern doctors asked them to leave the place.

As the newsmen did not respond, the doctors swooped on them. They also took away their cameras and damaged them, alleged the speakers.

They also demanded immediate punishment of the attackers of the journalists.

Kazi Yeasin, Aatul Karim Khokon, Mir Golam Mustafa, Saiful Islam, Amit Roy, Md. Mosharraf Hossain, Babul Hossain, Sheikh Mohiuddin Ahmed, Hossain Shaheed and Abu Saleh Musa, among others, addressed the rally.

Contacted, Dr Bikash Chandra Pal, secretary of Intern Doctors Association, refuted the allegation of

attack on the journalists.

Cancer patient Aysha Khanam was admitted to the hospital on Tuesday night and then referred to Incentive Care Unit (ICU) as her condition deteriorated, he said.

As there was no vacant seat at the ICU, the patient's attendances locked in an altercation over the issue and in the mean time Aysha died.

As the death news spread, Maruf, son of Aysha and some others, attacked Dr Abdullah Mohammad, alleged Bikash.

Protesting the attack, some 200 interns at the hospital went for the strike, he said.

Dr Motiur Rahman Bhuiyan, secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Mymensingh unit, said punitive action would be taken against those responsible for the attack on the newsmen after investigating the matter.



PHOTO: STAR

Around 200 farmers and tractor drivers join a colourful procession on tractors at Daitola in Jessore Sadar upazila as they arranged a picnic and an excursion in the area yesterday.

Khagrachhari clash leaves 7 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At least seven people were injured in a clash between indigenous people and settlers in Batchhari area under Sadar upazila yesterday.

The injured are Mohammad Ripon Tarafdar, 45, Md Jahadul Islam, 26, Md Sajahan, 42, Razaul Karim, 27, Sahid Biswas of Bhuyachhari area and Biplob Jyoti Chakma, 42, and Ramadavi Chakma, 60, of Barnal Mukh area in the upazila.

Police and locals said some hill people attacked a group of Bangalee settlers of Bhuyachhari area with lethal weapons around 8:30am when the latter went to the adjoining Batchhari to search for a boy 'missing' from the area the day before.

As the news of attack spread, the agitating settlers swooped on Biplob and Ramadavi Chakma of Barnal Mukh area, triggering the clash.

Mohammad Sahidur, 12, son of one Sahar Ali of Bhuyachhari area, went missing allegedly from Batchhari area on Tuesday afternoon, said Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, officer in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Meanwhile, Chairman of Kamalchhari Union Parishad Supal Khisha said, locals attacked the settlers.

Additional police, BGB and army personnel have been deployed in the area to avert further trouble, said Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Masud Karim.

Local lawmaker Kujendra Lal Tripura said a group of criminals have patronised the violence by spreading rumours and communal sentiment among the people of both communities.

Missing schoolboy found dead

Police recovered the body of a schoolboy, who went missing from Keshabpur village in Kumarkhali upazila of the district on Tuesday, from an abandoned house at the village yesterday.

Azmi Ahmed, 6, a class one student of Keshabpur Primary School and son of Abir Ahmed of the village, went missing when came out of their house on Tuesday noon.

Locals found Azmi's body at an abandoned house of the village at around 8:30am yesterday and informed the police.

Being informed, police went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Kushtia Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Lutfar Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kumarkhali Police Station said the body bore marks of injuries.

Police picked up a boy named Joy, 12, from the village for interrogation. Contacted, Officer-in-Charge Lutfar Rahman said they are investigating the incident.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent reported that police recovered the body of a man from a paddy field at Chondiber Uttarpara village in Bhairab upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The deceased was Mujibur Rahman, 32, a carpenter. Police quoted locals as saying that Mujib went missing on Tuesday night.

Locals found his body lying in the paddy field and informed the police, who rushed to the spot, recovered the body with his throat slit.

Later, the body was sent to Kishoreganj Modern Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately, said the OC Soarafat Ullah of Bhairab police station. He believes Mujib might be killed over previous enmity.



PHOTO: STAR

Aduri with her mother and brother at their Jainkathi village home in Patuakhali Sadar upazila.

Tortured Aduri now gets schooling

The ex-domestic help starts new life as police, others extend help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Aduri, rescued from brutal tortured by her employer in Dhaka last year, is now happy with her new life, being enrolled as a Class I student at Jainkathi Salehia Dakhil Madrasa at her home village Jainkathi under Patuakhali Sadar upazila.

"I am attending my classes regularly. The students and teachers are very cooperative. Here I have some friends and they love me," said Aduri, who still feels pain on her head due to the torture on her during her stay as a domestic help at a house at Pallabi

in the capital.

A few days ago, a UNICEF team including child consultant Naieem Gowhar, and Mirza Shahidul Islam Khalid, executive director of local NGO Sankalpa Trust, visited Aduri at her house and assured help for continuation of her study.

Early, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) gave her 0.12 acres of land worth Tk 1.50 lakh at her village to build a new house for her family.

The DMP also gave them Tk 2.5 lakh.

Aduri is seventh among nine sisters and brothers -- of them, Sohel, Sohag and Jewel run the family by

fishing in nearby Sehakathi River.

Recently her sister Sania Akhter was married off and about Tk one lakh was spent for the purpose from the money deposited with Aduri's account, said her mother Safia Begum.

On September 23 last year, two women rescued Aduri from a dustbin at Palabi in Dhaka, where her employer Nourin Jahan left her for dead, following series of brutal torture.

After treatment for one a half months at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, police handed her to her family on November 3.

SPOTLIGHT: UPAZILA POLLS

Hindus in Patgram 'unsure' of casting votes in today's polls

Attacks centring on January 5 election still haunt them

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

A good number of Hindu voters in Patgram upazila under the district are still uncertain about casting their votes in today's upazila election as activists of BNP and Jamaat-Islami attacked the people of the minority community before and after the January 5 national polls.

Meanwhile, alleged leaders of the attackers, a district Jamaat member Abu Hena Md Ershad Hossain and Surah member of the organisation Aatur Rahman are contesting as chairman and vice chairman candidates in the upazila.

"BNP-Jamaat men attacked the business centres, houses, even temples of the Hindus at different villages of Patgram upazila before and after the January 5 election. Now we are too afraid to cast our votes in tomorrow's [Thursday] upazila election," said Narayan Chandra Ghosh of Ghospura village of the upazila.

"We will not go out from house on the upazila election day, as we are under watch of a group of people. They will take revenge if their chosen candidates fail to win the polls," said Narayani Rani Sen of Senpara village.

"Candidates from BNP, Jamaat, even Awami League blame Hindu voters when they fail to win. Ruling

Awami League men hardly came to our help when we were attacked earlier," said Nirmol Chandra Sen at Shafinagar village of the upazila.

Nitai Chandra Ghosh, a leader of the Hindu community in Patgram, said at least 15 percent of the total 1,31,968 voters in the upazila are Hindus but people of the minority community are passing time amid worry as they may face fresh attack centring the polls.

In the upazila, five candidates are contesting for the upazila chairman post, four for vice chairmanship and two for the seat of the vice chairman reserved for women.

These people belonging to Hindu community at Shafinagar village in Bawra union of Patgram upazila under Lalmonirhat district are visibly worried on the eve of today's upazila parishad election, as the minority people fell victim to several attacks by Jamaat and BNP men before and after the January 5 national elections.



PHOTO: STAR

These people belonging to Hindu community at Shafinagar village in Bawra union of Patgram upazila under Lalmonirhat district are visibly worried on the eve of today's upazila parishad election, as the minority people fell victim to several attacks by Jamaat and BNP men before and after the January 5 national elections.