

Transport, quarry workers go on strike for repair of Sylhet highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Demanding a prompt reconstruction of the Sylhet-Companiganj-Bholaganj Road, eleven organisations yesterday started a strike for an indefinite period and blocked important points of the road.

The organisations are Sylhet District Truck Covered Van Shramik Union, District Truck Covered Van Owners Group, Chhalia Sobuj Bangla Owners Samity, Rongitila Somaj Kollayan Sangstha, Godhuly Somaj Kollayan Sangstha, Salutikor-Companiganj-Goainghat Bus Owners Samity, Ambarkhana-Salutikor-Companiganj CNG Autorickshaw Shramik Union, Dhopagul Stone Business Owners Samity, Salutikor Stone Business Owners Samity and Khadimnagar Chhatra Kallayan Sangstha.

They also called to lay siege to the Sylhet office of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) on Friday.

Locals said even transports carrying medicine could not pass the blockades. The situation could turn for the worse if the strike continues, they feared.

Sylhet-Companiganj-Bholaganj Road played an important role in transporting stones and sands from the country's biggest stone quarry at Bholaganj; it was also used by thousands of stone carrying trucks everyday, said locals, adding that they were also suffering as the road had almost become useless for lack of maintenance.

"We just need to know when the work will start," said Iqbal Ahmed, general secretary of Salutikor-Companiganj-Goainghat Bus Owners Samity.

According to the RHD, Ecne sanctioned TK 441.54cr on April 7 last year to upgrade the "Airport Bypass Intersection-Lalbag-Salutikor-Companiganj-Bholaganj" from district road to highway and the prime minister laid the project foundation stone on October 8.

Five months have passed; the rainy season is approaching and still the administration is indifferent, alleged locals.

They quoted Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader as saying at a press briefing in Sylhet on November 21 last year that the construction would start on February 1.

"We've forwarded papers to the department on February 16. We hope to start soon. The time limit is 34 months and we expect to meet the deadline once the work started," said Iftekhar Kabir, additional chief engineer of RHD Sylhet.



Most of the 36km of Sylhet-Companiganj-Bholaganj Road remains in an awful condition, much to the nuisance of commuters and goods transporters. Steps are yet to be taken even after Ecne sanctioned a TK 441.54cr repair project. Demanding a prompt re-construction, eleven transport, quarry and local organisations yesterday started a strike for an indefinite period and created blockades in several important points of the road, inset. The photos were taken from the Airport Bypass Road area around noon.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH NASIR



Where stinking garbage greets school students

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

A horrible stench arose from garbage piled up beside two parked rickshaw vans and a drain overflowing with noxious liquid while two dogs rummaged for edibles and a man relieved himself in a space between a parked pickup truck and a wall, all within two or three feet of a blue steel gate.

Except for a signboard on top, there was no way of telling yesterday that this gate is a school's entrance.

Yet every day over 800 children enter through this gate and attend classes at Nawab Katra Government

Primary School in the capital.

"It is a school but locals have been over the years using this place to dump garbage," said one of the locals, Sumaiya Akhtar. Unable to bear the situation, she admitted her son to another school, Chankharpu Primary School, around a hundred yards away.

"It is a matter of concern for his health as well," she said.

Another local, Md Ripon, said many parents do not want to enroll their children in the school for the filthy environment. "Sometimes it becomes unbearable for students to attend classes due to the stench as

cleaners often do not take the garbage away," he said.

The school's headmaster, Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, said the situation worsens even after light showers as the entrance gets flooded due to poor drainage facilities. He said they raised the issue with the local authorities several times but to no avail.

"We have requested locals and hung a notice requesting to refrain from dumping garbage and parking vehicles here," he said.

In March last year, the school authority even filed a general diary with Bangshal Police Station as there

was no local councillor at that time.

One year later, the school committee submitted a letter, received by ward 33 Secretary Azizur Rahman on March 13, seeking necessary steps. Ward Councillor Awal Hossain said he was unaware of the matter.

"Right now we are cleaning drains and our vehicles are busy in transporting garbage. Due to the shortage of transportation, there might have been a delay of two or three days in carrying the garbage away," he said.

He could not provide a satisfactory answer when asked why garbage was being dumped there.

Only one charged for killing five of family in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N' ganj

Detectives submitted the charge sheet to a Narayanganj court yesterday accusing only one person in a case filed for killing five members of a family in January this year.

The accused, Mahfuz, maternal nephew of the murder case complainant Shafiqul Islam, is now in jail. Inspector Abul Khayer of detective branch (DB) of Police in Narayanganj, also investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Shahidul Islam in the afternoon.

Quoting the charge sheet, Superintendent of Police Khandker Mahid Uddin at a press briefing at his Narayanganj office said Mahfuz alone tactfully killed the five one after another at their house in Baburail area of the city on January 16.

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Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Shahidul Islam, an NGO worker and elder brother of Diplomatic Correspondent of The Daily Star Rezaul Karim Lotus, died due to heart disease on Tuesday night at his Sarkarpara residence in Thakurgaon municipality area. He was 60.

He left behind his wife, a son and a daughter.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held on Sarkarpara mosque premises yesterday. He was buried in the graveyard adjacent to Wapda mosque after second namaz-e-janaza.

Leaders of different political parties and social organisations mourned his death and conveyed sympathy to his bereaved family.

Mahmudur

FROM PAGE 4 Sub-inspector Azizul Haque, also the investigation officer of the case, appealed to the court to show Mahmudur Rahman arrested.

The IO also submitted a seven-day remand prayer for quizzing him to find out vital clues about the attack on police in the capital's Kotwali area on February 23, 2013. The court, however, fixed April 12 for hearing the remand prayer.

Meantime, another Dhaka court yesterday rejected a prayer for showing him arrested in another case filed with Motijheel Police Station for making Hefajat-e-Islam members create violence on the city's Shapla Chatter on May 5, 2013.

Earlier on February 15, Mahmudur was shown held in a bomb blast case, a day after the Supreme Court upheld a High Court bail granted to him in a sedition case.

On April 11, 2013, Mahmudur was picked up from his newspaper office in the capital's Karwan Bazar. The newspaper stopped printing in mid-April that year.



It might be hard to believe but the blue gate at the far right is an entrance through which some 800 children enter Nawab Katra Government Primary School in the capital every day. The school authorities say they hang a notice (on the top left corner) but the locals still dump garbage and park vehicles while the open drain (adjoining the school's boundary wall) seems to be always overflowing, worsening the situation even after light showers. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

NEWS IN brief

Road crash kills three in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A woman, her son and a relative were killed in a head-on collision between a CNG-run auto-rickshaw and a truck in Shahporan area of Sylhet city yesterday around 8:30pm.

The deceased were the auto-rickshaw's passengers Salma Begum, 70, her son Harunur Rashid, 45, and their relative Sayra Khatun, 28, of Zakiganj upazila in the district.

Officer-in-Charge of Shahporan police Shahjalal Munshi confirmed the incident.

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Novo Nordisk observes World Health Day today

CITY DESK

Novo Nordisk, a Danish multinational pharmaceutical company, will observe World Health Day today to raise awareness about the rise in diabetes and its consequences, said a press release yesterday.

This year World Health Organization (WHO) is focusing on diabetes with a slogan, "Beat Diabetes", as complications of this disease cause substantial economic loss for patients.

Novo Nordisk will provide diabetes screening at 83 centres of the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh, 167 Extended Diabetes Care Centres across the country, some government offices, Dhaka Reporters Unity, and Jatiya Press Club today.

British Council holds discussion on need for girls' digital skills

CITY DESK

The British Council organised a discussion titled "Digital Skills-Can They Change Girls' Lives?" in Lakeshore Hotel in the capital recently.

The discussion considered disparity between men and women in terms of access to the internet and smartphone use in developing countries.

Chowdhury Mufad Ahmed, additional secretary to the education ministry; Shahin Ahmed Chowdhury, director general of the Department of Women Affairs; Mahmuda Rahman Khan, senior programme development specialist, USAID Bangladesh; and Prof Geetiara Nasreen of Dhaka University also spoke.

BUBT seminar on Shakespeare held

CITY DESK

A seminar titled "Shakespeare: Our Contemporary" was held at the permanent campus of Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT) in the capital's Mirpur recently, said a press release yesterday.

Professor of the English department of Dhaka University Syed Manzoorul Islam delivered the keynote speech at the seminar organised by the English department of BUBT on the occasion of 400th death anniversary of William Shakespeare. BUBT Trustee Board Chairman AFM Sarwar Kamal, Trustee Board member Shafique Ahmed Siddique and BUBT Proctor Mian Lutfar Rahman were present among others at the seminar.

শাহবাগ, জাতীয় জাদুঘরে বইমেলা

৩০ থেকে ৪৫% পর্যন্ত মূল্যছাড়

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১০ প্রকাশনার যৌথ আয়োজনে উৎসবে আরো থাকছে বইকেন্দ্রিক নানা আয়োজন

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নলিনীকান্ত ভট্টশালী প্রদর্শনী গ্যালারি বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর ২রা থেকে ১২ই এপ্রিল ২০১৬ পর্যন্ত

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STAR WEEKEND in other news...

This week, the Star Weekend has an array of interesting articles for our readers. The spotlight this week is about the relocation of the dwellers of the Bihari and Geneva camps. There is also a remembrance piece on Chirag Roy, a Kolkata-based conservation biologist who contributed to the conservation of nature and wildlife in Bangladesh. Don't forget your copy of Star Weekend tomorrow, Friday!

WHERE IS HOME? DEBANA RAHMAN

45 years ago, as a people celebrated their independence, another group was deprived of all sentiments of their freedom at the same time. This community of over 7 lakh people were not welcome in the new world that was born in 1971. Without a place to go, the community was spread into 116 camps around the country, forever to be known as the displaced Pakistanis who couldn't go back to their real home. It took over four decades for the country to decide to finally recognise the so-called stranded Pakistanis as Bangladeshis. But there is a steep price that they will have to pay; one that threatens to wipe the very communities they have fostered. Read more in our spotlight on Pages 8 and 9.

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