



The yard of Barapukur Coal Mining Company Ltd in Dinajpur gives a deserted look yesterday as the authorities failed to resume coal production on scheduled March 1, following month-long work for machinery transfer to a new coalface. PHOTO: STAR

# Coal production at Barapukuria yet to resume

Contracted China company skipped work since March 1 as arrears unpaid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Barapukur Coal Mining Company Ltd (BCMCL) failed to resume production on scheduled March 1 as CMC-XMC Consortium, the Chinese contractor of the company, has refrained from work demanding arrears worth around Tk 186 crore.

BCMCL Managing Director Abdur Rahman confirmed that coal production, which remained suspended throughout the course of last February due to shifting of equipment and machinery, did not resume on March 1 and the situation remained the same as of yesterday due to the unpaid arrears.

No official of the CMC-XMC Consortium was available to make comment on the issue.

Earlier the contracted company in a letter sent to Petrobangla, the parent organisation of the BCMCL, had urged paying the dues by February 26. Otherwise, the coal production could not be resumed, the letter said.

The amount is due under various heads since CMC-XMC signed the contract with BCMCL on August 11 in 2017, said a BCMCL

official requesting anonymity.

And possibly due to fund crisis, the Chinese company failed to pay last month's salary of its 1,000 mine workers on March 5, the scheduled payday for the workers.

This correspondent tried to reach quite a few officials of the Chinese company for their comments, but no one responded.

Talking with this correspondent, several mineworkers said that the CMC-XMC offered them half their salaries yesterday, but the workers refused it.

"We are not taking half salary," said Robiul Islam, president of BCMCL mine workers union. He also said that CMC-XMC officials asked them to take half of their salaries on the plea of fund shortage.

Abdur Rahman, the MD of BCMCL, said that they failed to meet contracted company's deadline for adjusting Tk 119 crore as part value (production cost) of 1.45 lakh tonnes of missing coal, which mysteriously disappeared from the coal yard in July last year.

The market value of missing coal was Tk 230 crore. "We are trying to solve the problem as early as

possible," he said over phone on Tuesday, adding that a board meeting will be held in Dhaka on Thursday to solve the problem.

Contacted, a high official of Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) yesterday evening said that the matter had already been settled and the production would resume immediately.

The coalmine was set up by CMC-XMC in Dinajpur's Parbatipur upazila at a cost of Tk 1,400 crore. Coal production started in 2005.

It provides fuel for the 525MW coal-fired power plants near the BCMCL run by Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB).

Around 4,500 tonnes of coal are needed at the plant every day.

Asked if the suspension of coal production would affect the power plants, a BCMCL official said they have got enough stock to meet the demand for another two weeks.

The coal production of BCMCL has actually remained suspended for more than a month as the equipment and machinery were being shifted from one coalface underground to another during the course of last February.

# 5-murder accused UZ chairman candidate!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Sensational five-murder case accused Hanif Munshi has been nominated as Awami League (AL) candidate for the post of chairman in Ashuganj in the upcoming upazila parishad election to be held on March 31 in its fourth phase.

The candidate is also a joint convener of Ashuganj upazila unit of AL, and a resident of Chorchartola village in the upazila.

Many grassroots AL leaders expressed their anger and frustration for picking Hanif as the party candidate in the election.

On Sunday, Bashir Ahmed, a relative of the murder victims, filed a written complaint to the district election officer for seeking cancellation of Hanif's nomination. The copy of the complaint has also been sent to the chief election commissioner, inspector general of police, divisional commissioner of Chittogram, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in Brahmanbaria.

In the written complaint, it is stated that

Chittogram Speedy Tribunal issued an arrest warrant against Hanif in the case on September 25 last year.

On November 19 in 2006, the then vice president of upazila unit AL Rafiqul Islam's elderly mother, son, pregnant daughter, grandson and night guard of the house were strangled over previous enmity at Chorchartola village.

Presidents and secretaries of seven union units of upazila AL at a recent meeting decided to withdraw their support for murder accused Hanif.

Besides, seven sitting union parishad (UP) chairmen were present at the meeting with Talshahar UP Chairman Abu Shama in the chair at the auditorium of the union parishad on Sunday evening.

Contacted, Hanif said he got bail in the case from the court.

"The case is now under trial at the court. If the court delivers the final judgment, I will be proved guilty or innocent. A case may be true or false. I know I have been implicated in a false case," he said.

## Denied money for picnic, girl kills self

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An eighth grader allegedly committed suicide as her parents declined to give her money for picnic in Pirganj upazila of Rangpur on Monday.

The deceased was Hawa Khatun, 13, daughter of Sekendar Ali of Chhoto Ullampur village under Pirganj upazila, and a student of Ullampur Junior School.

"The girl asked for money from her parents to pay for a picnic that she wanted to join. But, they refused. On Monday afternoon, the girl hanged herself from a ceiling fan of her room," Soroj Kumar, officer in charge of Pirganj Police Station, quoted family members as saying.

## Abducted Dimla school girl rescued from Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A sixth-grade school girl, kidnapped two months ago from Dimla upazila in Nilphamari, was rescued from Savar in Dhaka on Monday.

A team of Nilphamari police with the help of Savar police rescued the girl and arrested the prime accused from a house in Nabinagar village, said Mafizuddin Sheikh, officer-in-charge (OC) of Dimla Police Station.

Police took the girl and the arrestee to Nilphamari and placed her in her father's custody, he added.

The arrestee, Kartik Das, 19, son of Nirmal Das from Puran Kancharipara village in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat, was sent to jail custody after he was produced before senior judicial magistrate's court in Nilphamari.

On January 7, Kartik and three others kidnapped the schoolgirl in a microbus while she was on way back to her home after school in Dimla, according to a case filed the same day by her father.

Even though the kidnappers took the girl to Dhaka and changed location frequently, police detected their location by tracking Kartik's cellphone, said OC Mafizuddin, adding that they were looking for the other three accused.

### DAKHIL EXAMINATIONS

# Madrasas collecting 'extra fees' in Rangabali UZ

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Most madrasas in Rangabali upazila in the district are collecting additional fees for two practical examinations in Dakhil examinations, alleged examinees.

The madrasas have been making each examinee pay Tk 400 to Tk 600, they said, adding that otherwise, their marks in the exams would be curtailed.

The two subjects for which Dakhil examinees are required to take 20-mark practical exams are agriculture studies and information, communication and technology (ICT).

On condition of anonymity, many examinees from Gabbunia Dakhil Madrasa said at the instruction of

Maulana Elias, the madrasa superintendent, one of their teachers collected Tk 500 from each of them.

They also said the madrasa authorities asked them to pay the additional fees to ensure their marks in those two practical exams are not slashed.

A guardian of an examinee confirmed to have paid the additional fee to the madrasa during filling out form for Dakhil examinations.

Contacted, Maulana Elias, however, said he did not instruct anyone at the madrasa to collect additional fees from Dakhil examinees for the two subjects.

Rather, they "collected past due [payments] from them [the examinees], he claimed.

Chhotobaihsdia Dakhil Madrasa Superintendent Maulana Alomgir Hossain admitted to have collected additional fees. But he claimed that the fees they collected were for "various expenses".

He however refused to elaborate on what the "various expenses" were.

Commenting on the allegations, Rangabali Upazila Secondary Education Officer said it is unlawful to collect any additional fee for any practical exam.

"We are looking into the matter and if accusations against any superintendent or teacher is proven to be true, we'll take legal action against the individual concerned," he added.



The Netherlands Ambassador to Bangladesh Harry Verweij inaugurates five-day-long MIDAS SME Fair-2019 meant for encouraging women entrepreneurs in Pabna yesterday. Inset, the envoy sees items at a stall. PHOTO: STAR

# 200 illegal structures removed to free RHD land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) yesterday removed over 200 structures including several multi-storied buildings that illegal occupiers had constructed on the lands of the department in Old Bus Stand area of Mirzapur upazila in Tangail.

The RHD officials and employees along with Golam Masum Prodhhan, executive magistrate in Tangail, launched the drive from 10:00am to 2:00pm and removed the illegal structures including shops, hotels, restaurants, workshops and dwelling houses beside the Old Dhaka-Tangail Road.

Following instructions from the higher authorities, the illegal structures erected on the government lands are being removed for ensuring smooth movement of vehicles on the road, said Imran Farhat, a sub-divisional engineer of RHD in Tangail.

"Earlier, the government lands were marked following a survey and we served notices on several occasions during the last couple of months, asking the occupiers

to remove the illegal structures on their own.

"Lastly, announcement was made through loudspeaker, urging the illegal occupiers to remove the structures yesterday [Monday]. As they failed to comply, the RHD started the drive and demolished around 200 structures from

10:00am to 3:00pm today [Tuesday]," the official said.

Such drives to remove illegal structures from government lands will continue, he added.

During yesterday's drive, owners of several structures including Manjur Hossain, Kabir Ahmed, Faruk Ahmed, Shilpy Begum and

Paritosh claimed to the officials that they had valid documents for ownership of the lands.

Asked about the matter, the RHD official said, "We are removing only the structures that were erected illegally on government lands, after confirmation about the matter from the local land office."



A bulldozer goes into operation as the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) conducts a drive yesterday to remove over 200 illegal structures in Old Bus Stand area of Mirzapur upazila in Tangail. PHOTO: STAR

### বাংলাদেশের চালে ভারী ধাতুর উপস্থিতি মানব দেহের জন্য ক্ষতিকর নয়

আর্সেনিকসহ ক্যাডমিয়াম, সিসা, নিকেল এবং ক্রোমিয়াম মৌলিক পদার্থ। উল্লিখিত ভারী ধাতুগুলো প্রকৃতিতে জৈব এবং অজৈব অবস্থায় থাকে। অজৈব ভারী ধাতুগুলো জৈব ভারী ধাতুগুলোর চেয়ে বেশি ক্ষতিকারক। ভারী ধাতুগুলো চালে জৈব অবস্থায় (Organic form) থাকে যা স্বাস্থ্যের জন্য ক্ষতিকর নয়। মানুষের শরীরের জন্য একটি নির্দিষ্ট মাত্রায় ভারী ধাতুর প্রয়োজনীয়তা রয়েছে। তবে বিষক্রিয়ার মূলনীতি অনুযায়ী 'মাত্রাতিরিক্ত সকল কিছুই বিষক্রিয়া থাকবে'। গবেষণায় বাংলাদেশের চালে যে পরিমাণ ভারী ধাতুর উপস্থিতি রয়েছে, তা নিম্নে দেয়া হলো

ক্রম	ভারী ধাতুর নাম	চালে উপস্থিতি (গড়)*	সহনীয় মাত্রা**
০১	আর্সেনিক	০.৩১ পিপিএম	১.০০ পিপিএম
০২	ক্যাডমিয়াম	০.০৪ পিপিএম	০.২০ পিপিএম
০৩	সিসা	০.০৫ পিপিএম	০.২০ পিপিএম
০৪	নিকেল	৪.০০ পিপিএম	১০.০ পিপিএম
০৫	ক্রোমিয়াম	০.৯০ পিপিএম	১.০০ পিপিএম

তথ্যসূত্র: \*বাংলাদেশ খান গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (বি), \*\* এফএও, ডব্লিউএইচও ও ইউরোপীয় কমিশন

ব্রিগ গবেষণায় নিশ্চিত হওয়া গেছে, চালে যে পরিমাণ ভারী ধাতু আছে তা মানব দেহের জন্য ক্ষতিকর নয়। তাই চাল নিয়ে অযথা আতঙ্কিত হওয়ার কোনো প্রয়োজন নেই।

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