

Panchagarh-Rangpur highway blocked for an hour

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Agitating dwellers of Kaharol upazila in Dinajpur yesterday blocked Panchagarh-Rangpur highway for an hour after a teenage boy was allegedly kidnapped from his school area.

The blockade started at 11:00am. Police, however, managed to convince the protesters and lift the blockade before 12:00 noon, said Auyb Ali, officer-in-charge of Kaharol Police Station.

Al-Amin, 13, who was allegedly abducted, claimed a group of criminals picked him up in a microbus on his way to school around 10:00am.

He somehow managed to flee the abductors as the microbus took a break at Ramdubi village in the district's Sadar upazila. With the help of Ramdubi dwellers, he contacted his father over phone and returned home around 10:45am, Al-Amin added.

As the news spread, agitating villagers blocked the road.

Locals of the Ramdubi village, however, said Al-Amin was roaming around the area in school uniform. With a mobile phone in his hand, he was looking for a job in different stores.

Due to his suspicious activities, Ramdubi dwellers held him and then handed him over to his father, they said.

Abu Sayem, superintendent of Dinajpur Police, said the incident was mysterious and they were investigating.

Myanmar

FROM PAGE 16
delegation, they met again yesterday morning.

Mohibullah said the Myanmar delegation had come up with the same old proposals that they rejected before.

"They said we will have to live in ADP camps. We don't agree with that proposal," the Rohingya leader said.

He also said that not a single Rohingya would return to Myanmar if they were not guaranteed citizenship.

Mohibullah said they proposed that the Myanmar delegation, who reached Cox's Bazar on Friday, return after two months after taking recognition of their rightful demands.

Bangladesh and Myanmar signed the repatriation deal on November 23, 2017.

On January 16, 2018, Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a document on "Physical Arrangement", which was supposed to facilitate the repatriation of the Rohingyas.

The "Physical Arrangement" stipulates that the repatriation would be completed preferably within two years from the start.

The first batch of Rohingyas was scheduled to return on November 15 last year but it did not happen amid unwillingness of the Rohingyas due to a lack of congenial environment in the Rakhine State.

A brutal campaign by Myanmar's military in 2017 drove 730,000 Rohingya Muslim to flee to Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, where they live in camps, fearing further persecution if they return.

An UN investigation has said Myanmar's operation mass killing, gang rape and arson was executed with genocidal intent.

Myanmar, however, denies the allegations.

Give them

FROM PAGE 16
Burma (Myanmar).

"But now they should either be treated as nationals or they should be given their territory to form their own state," he said in an interview with Turkey's Anadolu Agency in Ankara during his four-day visit to the country.

In 2017, more than 700,000 ethnic Rohingyas were driven from Rakhine state following a military-led crackdown that a United Nations' report said included mass killings and gang rapes.

"We should tell China (to) please treat these people as citizens. The fact that they have a different religion should not influence the treatment towards them. When you resort to violence, then it's very difficult to find a good conclusion because there has been no case where violence has achieved the objective," he said.

Meanwhile, on Turkey's fight against the Fethullah Terrorist Organisation (FETO) both inside and outside the country, Mahathir said Malaysia does not support insurrection in any country.

"It is our policy not to be used as a base for action taken against other countries. It is for that reason that when we find that there are some attempts to make use of Malaysia as a base for dissent against the Turkish government, we have taken action to close these (FETO-linked) schools," he said.

Verdict

FROM PAGE 2
and owners Shahadat Hossain and Jahangir Alam. Of them Shahadat is on bail, Asad on the run, and the remaining four in jail.

On September 6 last year, the investigation officer submitted the charge-sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka against the six, and homicide charges were framed against them on October 25.

No policemen charge-sheeted

FROM PAGE 1

miscreants in the incident.

Yesterday, the Santals in Gobindaganj upazila rejected the 50-page charge sheet against 90 people.

Ex-Sapmara Union Parishad Chairman Shakil Akhund Bulbul and member Shah Alam are among the charge-sheeted accused.

Several leaders of the Santal community said Abul Kalam Azad, former Awami League lawmaker from Gaibandha-4, and policemen were involved in the arson attacks but their names were not included in the charge sheet.

Abdul Hye Sarker, additional superintendent of police at the PBI, submitted the charge sheet to the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court which accepted it.

Later, around 300 Santals from Sahebganj-Bagda farm took position on Go-bindaganj-Dinajpur highway at Katabari and blocked it for four hours.

Voicing frustration, Philimon Baske, president of Sahebganj-Bagda Farm Bhumi Uddhar Sangram Committee, said, "The prime accused, ex-MP Abul Kalam Azad, and several others involved in the arson attack were not included in the charge sheet.

"The video clip showed their involvement in the heinous attack on us. We reject the charge sheet."

Zafrul Islam, secretary of the committee, said, "Abul Kalam Azad was the main accused in the case that we had filed. It included the names of 33 people and also 500 to 700 unnamed people.

"While the investigation was going on, we found out the attackers, and prepared a list of 250 involved in the attacks and murder of three Santal

men, and torching, and looting of our houses.

"We have no confidence in the charge sheet," he added.

The platform's Organising Secretary Sufla Hembrom said, "[Former] MP Abul Kalam Azad was the main culprit, who ordered his cadres to torch our houses, and evict and murder our people. He was the mastermind but police intentionally left him out of the charge sheet."

The Santal leaders demanded a fresh charge sheet incorporating the names of Azad and others involved in the attack.

They said they will move a no-confidence petition against the charge sheet and hold a press conference tomorrow.

The Daily Star tried to reach the former MP over his mobile phone several times but there was no response.

Contacted, Abdul Hye, one of the six PBI officials who carried out the probe, said that during the investigation, they didn't find Azad's links to the attacks.

Asked about the video footage that showed three policemen's involvement in the arson attacks on Santal houses, the PBI official said they couldn't confirm it from any sources.

He said the PBI submitted the charge sheet after a long probe. It also considered the reports of the earlier investigations.

The probe found that the charge-sheeted persons had been involved in torching and looting of Santal houses and killing of Santal men, he added.

The accused include Sapmara union parishad members Mosharrif Hossain, Ayub Ali and Shah Alam Sarker, Rangpur Sugar Mills General

Manager Nazmul Huda and CBA (Collective Bargaining Agents) leader Mostafizur Rahman.

The charge sheet mentioned the names of 220 people as prosecution witnesses.

On November 6, 2016, a tripartite clash broke out between the Santals, Rangpur Sugar Mills staffers and police over eviction of the indigenous people from the disputed land at Shahebganj cane farm of the mills.

The clash left three Santal men dead and 20 others, including nine policemen, injured. Santal houses were looted and torched.

On behalf of the indigenous community, Swapna Murmu filed the case with Go-bindaganj Police Station on November 16 that year.

Later, the case was transferred to the PBI.

PREVIOUS PROBES

According to a police probe report submitted to the HC on March 10, 2017, two policemen -- sub-inspector (Detective Branch) Mahabubur Rahman and Constable Sazzad Hossain of Gobindaganj Police Station -- were involved in setting fire to Santal houses.

As per an earlier HC order, a three-member probe committee led by the additional deputy IGP (Rangpur range) submitted the report through the deputy attorney general.

The DAG told the court that the two policemen had been suspended.

Earlier on January 30, 2017, Gaibandha Chief Judicial Magistrate Mohammad Sha-hidullah submitted a probe report to the HC, stating that three police personnel and some local miscreants were involved in the arson attacks on Santal houses.

He carried out the probe following an HC order on December 14, 2016.

The court gave the directives after different national and global media outlets aired a video content in which a policeman in uniform and a man in a half-sleeve shirt are seen apparently joining another in a pink T-shirt in setting fire to a Santal shanty. The video clip went viral in the social media.

CAUSE OF DISPUTE

During the Pakistan rule in 1952, the government had acquired 1,840 acres of land at Shahebganj to set up a sugarcane farm.

The DC's office acquired the land for the then Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, which subsequently set up Rangpur (Mahimaganj) Sugar Mills between 1954 and 1957.

In 1962, the DC office, on behalf of the land owners, signed an agreement with the corporation. The deal stated that the land was acquired for sugarcane cultivation by the mill authorities. The corporation would return the land to the government if it was used for farming any other crop.

However, the deal was violated by the mill authorities as they leased out most of the land in 2004 for cultivation of rice, wheat, mustard, tobacco and maize.

The Santals reportedly started building houses on the land after they learnt that the mill authorities were planting other crops illegally.

The Daily Star learnt from old documents that Santals owned most of the land before the government acquired it in the 1950s.

[Our Gaibandha and Bogura correspondents contributed to this report]

Injured

FROM PAGE 16

the ferry's operation but to no avail.

The ferry started loading vehicles around 10:20pm when the authorities learnt that the high official was close to the terminal.

Around 11:00pm, the official arrived and the started moving.

Titash died on the ferry, said Bijoy.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation's manager Abdus Salam said he did not know that there was a critical patient at the terminal.

The ferry had been waiting for Md Abdus Sabur Mondal, the head of Digital Service and Public Service Innovation Cluster and E-service Implementation Specialist of the Access to Information (a2i) Programme at the Prime Minister's Office.

He said he did not know that a critically-injured patient was kept waiting or that a ferry was kept waiting for him. Such an act is unacceptable, he said.

Criminal

FROM PAGE 16

According to Major Mahedi Hasan, deputy director of Rab-7 (Chandgaon camp), a team of the elite force conducted a raid in Purba Chambal's hilly areas on information that a robber gang was positioned there.

As soon as they located the criminals and approached them, Jaker and his cohorts opened fire on the law enforcers, forcing them to retaliate, he claimed.

Rab later found Jaker's bullet-hit body on the spot, the Rab official said, adding Jaker's cohorts managed to flee the scene.

The body was sent to Chattogram Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Rab also claimed to have recovered 11 types of firearms and huge amount of bullets from the spot.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the law enforcers' claims.

Were police sleeping?

FROM PAGE 16

The court, however, rejected the writ petition saying that it would not interfere in the case at this stage as the investigation was going on.

Writ petitioner Advocate Eunus Ali Akond has no locus standi (right) for moving the petition as he is not aggrieved by the killing of Rifat, the HC said.

Minni or her father might file the

writ petition as they are aggrieved by the incident, the court said.

At one stage of the hearing, Eunus expressed reluctance to move the petition before the court yesterday.

On July 25, Eunus submitted the petition requesting the HC to cancel the remand order against Minni and take steps so that her court statement in connection with the case is nullified. The petition also sought

Minni's immediate release.

In the petition, he also appealed for ordering the government to form a judicial inquiry committee to probe the killing of Sabir Hossain Nayan alias Nayan Bond, the prime accused in the case, in a "gunfight" with the law enforcers on July 2.

On June 26, Rifat, a 25-year-old internet service provider, was hacked to death in broad daylight in Barguna

town.

In a footage of the incident that went viral on social media, Minni was seen screaming and trying to save her husband from the assailants.

Minni was first named as a witness in the case; police later showed her as an accused. They claim that they found her involvement in the murder during probe.

No production, sale for 5 weeks

FROM PAGE 1

The level of the contamination could not be immediately known.

The 14 companies are Aftab Milk and Milk Producer Ltd (Aftab), Akij Food and Beverage Ltd (Farm Fresh Milk), American Dairy Limited (MOO), Bangladesh Milk Producers' Cooperative Limited (Milk Vita), Baro Awlia Dairy Milk and Foods Ltd (Dairy Fresh), BRAC Dairy and Food Project (Aarong Dairy), Danish Dairy Farm Ltd (Ayran) Ichhamoti Dairy and Food Products (PURA), Igloo Dairy Limited (Igloo), Pran Dairy Ltd (Pran Milk), Uttar Banga Dairy (Ultra), Turbo Bangla Dairy Food Industries (Arwa) and Tania Dairy and Food Products (Safe).

The BSTI tested their pasteurised milk at the laboratories of the Institute of Public Health (IPH), Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) in line with the July 14 order by the HC.

BSTI lawyer Sarker MR Hassan submitted the reports yesterday.

The BSTI must now submit a report to the court on August 25 after complying with the order. The report must include the steps the quality control authority has taken to improve

efficiency, said the HC bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir Lyton.

The court also asked the respondents to explain in two weeks why the presence of antibiotics and lead in pasteurised milk as well as their production and distribution should not be declared illegal.

The respondents are secretaries to the ministries of food, health and fisheries and livestock, director generals of the directorate of health services, BSTI and Bangla-desh Food Safety Authority (BFS), executive director of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), the inspector general of police and the 14 milk producing companies.

Interpreting the test reports, the HC said presence of antibiotics and lead in pasteurised milk was a matter of public health concern and a threat to the future generation.

The respondents are duty-bound to ensure safe food for citizens in line with articles 15, 18, 31 and 32 of the constitution, but they did not discharge their constitutional duties, it added.

The court also expressed astonishment as the respondents did not take any effective steps against

adulteration and contamination of pasteurised milk even 14 months after the HC issued a suo moto rule in May last year regarding the matter.

BSTI's lawyer Sarker MR Hassan told the court that the BSTI had no legal authority to test presence of antibiotics and lead in food.

The BSTI is trying to fix that problem by amending the relevant rules, he said.