

Locals block  
key rail routes  
in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Brahmanbaria

Demanding stoppage of several intercity trains at Brahmanbaria Railway Station, locals yesterday blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram, Dhaka-Sylhet, and Dhaka-Noakhali rail routes in Brahmanbaria town for an hour starting from 10:00am.

They also demanded the introduction of a special train on the Dhaka-Brahmanbaria route, an increase in seat capacity on existing trains and an end to the sale of tickets on the black market.

The protest, organised under the banner of the "Combined Social and Cultural Organisation", took place in the morning.

During the blockade, the Dhaka-bound intercity Subarna Express train from Chattogram was halted at Akhaura Railway Junction. Train services resumed after authorities assured the protesters of addressing their concerns.

According to protest organisers, the Zilla Nagorik Forum had been advocating these demands for the past seven years. Frustrated by inaction, various social and cultural organisations united to stage the demonstration. Local administrative officials, including the UNO and police officers, intervened to convince the protesters to lift the blockade.

Demonstrators pointed out that Brahmanbaria is an important station on the eastern railway corridor, contributing significant revenue to the government. However, the quality of passenger services has not improved accordingly. They lamented that only a few intercity trains stop at the station, causing severe inconvenience for local commuters.

Despite repeated appeals over the years, railway authorities have only given assurances without taking concrete action.



Many of the roads in the busy Bahaddarhat area in the port city remains under the clutches of vendors. Ongoing development work further complicates the situation. These factors together contribute to traffic congestion, making it difficult for residents to navigate the area. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

BRIDGE OVER BARAK RIVER

# Work yet to begin after 9 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The construction of a new bridge over Barak River near Sarkar Bazar in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila has yet to begin even though nine months have passed since the work order was issued.

The upazila administration invited tenders for constructing the new, 11-metre-long girder bridge to replace the old, dilapidated one over the river on April 4, 2024. The Department of Disaster Management allocated Tk 42.64 lakh for the project, and the contract was awarded Sajida Enterprises.

However, despite receiving the work order on May 28, the contractor firm has yet to commence construction.

"Crossing the river using the broken bridge becomes particularly challenging in monsoon, when it becomes slippery and causes people to slip and sustain injuries. Students sometimes use boats for the crossing when the river swells up in monsoon, but boats are not always available," said Nurul Islam, a resident of Nasirpur village.

Abu Mia Chowdhury, chairman of Khalilpur union parishad, said the local market is a major hub for cattle trade. The delayed construction of new bridge is compelling people to use the old bridge for access to the market, and bear extra expenses for



transporting goods and cattle, he added.

Abhijit Dey, an engineer representing the contractor firm, attributed the delay to political instability.

Also, the contract includes construction of six bridges in different locations, so priority was given to areas with less developed communication, he added.

Abhijit, however, assured that primary

work on the bridge over Barak river could be completed within 15 days, allowing construction to continue even during adverse weather conditions.

Contacted, Zahirul Islam, project implementation officer in the upazila, said he assumed his role only recently and did not have the contractor's contact information to reach out to them in this regard.

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## 1,021 detained in Dhaka

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dilapidated condition.

The Sreemangal municipality alleged that the college authorities did not hand over the library building to the municipality when it relocated. As such, no steps could be taken to renovate the structure.

Moreover, the college authorities earlier had demolished the rear boundary wall of the library and built an extended classroom, encroaching on the land of a children's park beside it.

A cyclone in April 2024 caused significant damage to the entire structure.

"The college authorities did not hand over the keys and other belongings when they left the building in 2020," said Zahirul Islam, executive engineer of Sreemangal municipality.

Contacted, Piyali Bhownik, acting principal of the college, claimed the college's activities were conducted in the library building with permission from the then municipal authorities. She, however, said there is no document in this regard.

Islam Uddin, UNO of Sreemangal, said there is a plan to establish a modern public library on the land. "We are working in this regard," he added.

The arrestees include 15 robbers, 24 professional snatchers, five extortions, 12 thieves, 27 drug dealers, and 30 individuals with outstanding warrants.

Law enforcers seized 12 sharp weapons, a microbus, four mobile phones, and Tk 62,290 in cash from the detainees. Additionally, they confiscated 238 yaba pills and 37.6 kg of cannabis.

A total of 49 cases were filed, and legal action has been initiated against those arrested.

According to the DMP's Crime Command and

Control Center, 550 patrol teams have been deployed across 50 police stations in Dhaka to ensure security and smooth movement of the people of Dhaka Metropolitan City.

Additionally, 65 police checkpoints have been set up at key locations, with 20 more operated by the specialised police unit APBN alongside the DMP.

To further strengthen security, 14 patrol teams from the CTC, 12 from the Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU), and 10 from the DMP and Rab are stationed in crime-prone areas of the city.

## Outsourced workers

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programme on February 23.

Ashraful Alam, a leader of BCMCL's outsourced workers, said despite working at the mine for 15-20 years, they remain deprived of various benefits, including salary increments and festival bonuses, unlike their permanent counterparts.

The then Awami League

government in 2018 had issued a directive revoking essential benefits for outsourced workers, putting many temporary employees in financial distress, he alleged.

After the AI government's ouster, the outsourced workers staged protest in Dhaka, and received assurances from the then advisory council on wage disparity concerns.

However, since no steps have yet been taken to meet their demands, the workers resumed their protest, Ashraful added.

Contacted, Mohammad Sanaullah, general manager (Administration) of BCMCL, said the mine authority is awaiting directives from the government, while a court verdict in this regard is currently under review by the law ministry.

## Man killed, another hurt

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The fire and explosion reportedly occurred while Malek and Faruk were asleep.

Meanwhile, another fire, that raged through Shewrapara kitchen market in Dhaka early yesterday, gutted 61 shops including a shoe

showroom, according to the fire service.

Lima Khanam, duty officer at the fire service headquarters, told UNB that the fire erupted from an electric short circuit at a shop in the kitchen market near Shewrapara Metro Station on Begum Rokeya Sarani.

Firefighters managed to bring the blaze under control after 45 minutes and it was completely doused around 5:50am.

The fire damaged 51 kitchen shops, eight grocery stores, a Bata showroom and an electric shop, she added.

## NU regional office in Bogura inaugurated

CITY DESK

The Regional Center of the National University (NU) in Bogura was inaugurated yesterday.

National University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr ASM Amanullah inaugurated the regional office in the morning.

Later, at an event centring the inauguration, Prof Amanullah said, "With the opening of this regional centre, the NU students won't have to take trouble to go to Dhaka or Rajshahi to get academic and administrative service anymore."



## Hope for a new dawn

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-- if qualified -- can become prime minister."

For many young attendees, this rally marked their first active participation in politics.

Rakib Fakir, a National University student from Savar, held a placard in support of the new party. "Since becoming politically aware, I have only seen Sheikh Hasina in power. I never even had the chance to vote. We were disengaged, but not anymore. From now on, I will be involved in politics in support of the new party."

However, he believes NCP could be the answer by establishing an inclusive democratic state and promoting equality and justice.

Delwar Hossain, who hailed from Narayanganj, said, "People have been held hostage by two major political parties, both of which have established dynasties. We believe that in this new party, even a hawker or a farmer's child

and his family members when they had already left the country.

Following the rally, a protest procession was carried out in the city.

Rabbi also recalled that in 2014, a year after the murder, Rab announced that the investigation was nearly complete, and a draft charge sheet was prepared. However, the investigating authorities have yet to finalise and submit it to the court.

He criticised the decision to issue a travel ban on Shamim Osman

and his family members when they had already left the country.

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Tagi went missing after he left his Shaista Khan Road home in Narayanganj for Sudhijon Pathagar, a local library, around 4:00pm on March 6, 2013.

A day after his body was found, his A-level results were out, which showed he got the world's highest mark in physics in that exam, obtaining 297 out of 300.

## Curtain falls

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bought novels, essays, and history books this year."

Poetry enthusiasts voiced their concerns about the lack of new and engaging poets, with Salauddin Shimul, a visitor, lamenting, "Poetry sales are down overall."

This year's fair was also fraught with challenges.

On February 7, during the first Shishu Prohor (Children's Hour), the absence of Sisimpur disappointed the little book lovers.

Further controversies emerged, including an incident on February 10 when a group of people stormed the Sabyasachi stall displaying books by Taslima Nasrin, leading to police intervention.

On February 15, a controversy erupted on social media over the closure of a stall selling sanitary pads and diapers. A letter -- regarding the closure circulated on Facebook -- said "several Islamist groups" had

## Hills razed

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collected the soil from a subcontractor who extracted it from registered land, not from hills.

Md Shahinul Islam, range officer of Cox's Bazar South Forest Division (Ukhiya), said they received a complaint a few days ago and launched an investigation.

"We found an area where small hills were razed. Further investigation is ongoing," he said.

## We Remember



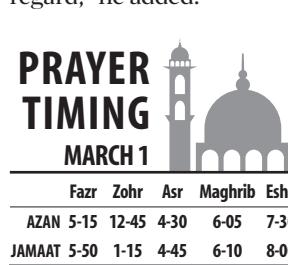
20.09.33 - 1.3.2023

On his 22nd death anniversary today, we profoundly remember late Matiur Rahman - a Freedom Fighter, Founder & Chairman of Kisan Group, Former Cabinet Minister and former President of Dhaka Chamber of commerce & Industries.

Charity lunches will be served today at orphanage. Please pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Chondona, Robin, Shuvo & Amit

&  
Members of Kisan Group  
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