

Locals block railway, seek train stop at Charghat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Train services on the Rajshahi-Dhaka route were briefly disrupted yesterday morning after residents of Rajshahi's Charghat upazila staged a blockade, demanding an intercity train stop at Nandangachhi Railway Station.

The blockade began around 6:30am when locals, under the banner of "People of Charghat from All Walks of Life", gathered on the tracks near Nandangachhi station.

They halted the Sagordari Express by waving red cloths as it approached, confirmed Rajshahi Railway Station Manager Moin Uddin.

He said, "The blockade ended at 8:45am after two hours of demonstration. Other than the Sagordari Express to Khulna, only the Silk City Express to Dhaka was delayed in its departure from Rajshahi due to the protest. All other trains departed on schedule."

Easy bike driver found dead in river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Police recovered the body of a battery-run easy bike driver from the Chanda river near Chandpur Bridge area under Rajbari's Kalukhali upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Aslam Pramanik, 42, said Kalukhali Police Station Officer in Charge Mohammad Zahedur Rahman.

The body has been sent to the Rajbari Sadar Hospital morgue for a post-mortem examination, said the OC, adding that they are investigating whether it was a case of murder.

Efforts are underway to trace the missing vehicle, he added.

Aslam, who had previously worked as a manager at a brick kiln, had purchased the vehicle six months ago and had since been driving it to support his family.

Quoting family members, police said Aslam left home with the three-wheeler around 10:00am on Tuesday. His last phone conversation with his wife was around noon.

When he did not return home in the evening and stopped responding to calls -- his phone was found switched off around 10:00pm -- relatives began searching for him.

Not April

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"It would not be possible for a government formed in April to take up new reform projects in the next budget. But a February-elected government could," the statement said.

In this context, the coalition welcomed the planned meeting between Prof Yunus and Tarique Rahman in London, calling it a hopeful step toward resolving the current political deadlock.

"We urge both the chief adviser and the acting chairperson of BNP to seriously consider our election roadmap for the first week of February as part of their meeting agenda," it said.

The coalition said its reform proposal, based on the July Charter, includes key changes such as recognising the charter as the foundation for political consensus, introducing proportional representation in the upper house, ensuring neutrality in constitutional appointments, and holding direct elections to women's reserved seats.

It called on all major political parties, including BNP, to adopt these positions as part of a collective move toward democratic transition.

SC upholds 39-pt judicial code

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of the judiciary is preserved.

They should respect and comply with the constitution and law, and act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the judiciary.

The judges should not allow family, social, or other relationships to influence judicial conduct or judgement. A Judge should not lend the prestige of the judicial office to advance the private interests of others; nor convey or permit others to convey the impression that they

are in a special position to influence the Judge.

The judges should be faithful to and maintain professional competence in the law, and should not be swayed by partisan interests, public clamor, or fear of criticism.

They should be patient, dignified, respectful, and courteous to litigants, lawyers, and others with whom the Judge deals in an official capacity, and should require similar conduct of those officers to the Judge's control, including lawyers to the

extent consistent with their role in adversarial system, according to the code of conduct.

The judges should dispose of promptly the business of the court including avoiding inordinate delay in delivering judgements/orders. In no case a judgement shall be signed later than six months of the date of delivery of judgement.

They should avoid public comment on the merit of a pending or impending court case.

"A Judge shall disqualify himself/herself in a

proceeding in which the Judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned."

"A Judge shall disqualify himself/herself to hear a matter/cause where he served as lawyer in the matter in controversy, or with whom the Judge previously practiced during such association as a lawyer concerning the matter, or the Judge or such lawyer has been a material witness", the SC said in the verdict regarding the code of conduct.

Fishermen

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president of the Mohipur Fish Wholesalers' Association, said, "Each medium-sized boat has cost around Tk 2.5 lakh to prepare, while large trawlers are spending up to Tk 8 lakh for fuel, ice, and supplies. If we had been allowed to restart the ice plants 48 hours earlier, losses could've been reduced."

Not only in Mohipur and Alipur, but also in Dhosha, Ashakali, Lalua's Buro Jalia, and Chandupara, fishermen were preparing for their midnight journey to the sea.

Kalapara Upazila Senior Fisheries Officer Apu Saha said, "The aim of the ban was to ensure hilsa breeding and conserve biodiversity."

[Our correspondents from Barishal and Patuakhali contributed to this report.]

Restoration effort

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palace was built by Zamindar Rajchandra Roy sometime in the 1700s.

Alpana Roy, a descendant of the zamindar family who lives in Australia now, shared stories passed down from her father, Pankaj Roy Chowdhury, about the grandeur of the estate and its connection to Rabindranath Tagore.

Rakhal Chandra Roy, one of the sons of Zamindar Rajchandra, was related to the family of Rabindranath Tagore. Rakhal's daughters Sushila and Charubala were married to Tagore's nephews Arunendranath and Dipendranath.

Piarilal Roy, another son of the zamindar, was a noted barrister and philanthropist. Piarilal's two sons -- renowned aviator Indralal Roy and celebrated boxer Pareshal Roy -- were significant figures from the colonial history.

The zamindar's lineage traces back to its founder, Rupchandra Roy. The last known zamindar, Deben Lal Roy Chowdhury, eventually moved to Kolkata, India, where he

passed away. His daughter Mandira Roy Chowdhury was married into the Mukherjee family of Kashipur, Barishal.

Globally acclaimed author Arundhati Roy is also reportedly linked to the zamindar family through inheritance.

The prominent zamindar family over several generations contributed to public welfare through various initiatives including establishment of educational institutions -- Rajchandra College and Pushpa Rani Institution (PRC School) -- as well development of local infrastructure, including the excavation of the Lakutia Canal and construction of the Lakutia Road.

Many parts of the once-grand palace crumbled over the centuries, with the remaining structure largely covered in moss. The estate also features three large ponds with paved ghats, locally known as 'Babur Pukur'. The site is currently under the supervision of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation.

The restoration efforts have rekindled hope for the site to become a tourist attraction. Locals demanded that the restoration be completed comprehensively, including installing proper safety measures and employing security personnel.

However, concerns have been raised about a warehouse owned by BADC located adjacent to the palace, partially obscures its view. Lincoln Bayen, Barishal divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, remarked that the historical site's appeal would be compromised unless the warehouse is relocated.

Subhash Chandra Das, a government pleader for vested properties under the Barishal district administration, confirmed that the district administration has acquired ownership of an 8-acre pond within the estate.

"If the DoA can preserve the site properly, it has the potential to become a major tourist attraction," he added.

Children among 5 drown

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Jahidul, who was visiting a picnic spot in Basail upazila with his friends, drowned in Chapra Beel, a nearby swamp, around 3:00pm.

"He was brought dead to the hospital," said Dr Nahid Khan Sohag, in charge of

the emergency department at Basail Upazila Health Complex.

"The body is in police custody. The family of the deceased has been informed," said Farid Ahmed, a sub-inspector of Basail Police Station.



Under the banner "People of Charghat from All Walks of Life," locals staged a blockade yesterday, demanding that intercity trains stop at Nandangachhi Railway Station. The protest began at 6:30am and lasted for two hours, delaying the Sagordari Express to Khulna and the Silk City Express to Dhaka.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Guava growers brace for low output amid adverse weather

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Farmers in Pirojpur's Nesarabad upazila are anxious about a possible low yield of guava this year due to unfavourable weather conditions. Many fear they will not get the expected output from their orchards.

Harvesting is set to begin within a month in the upazila, where guava has been grown commercially for centuries. The fruit is supplied to local markets and then transported to various parts of the country by wholesale buyers.

Local farmers said the flowering period saw very little rainfall, resulting in a large number of flowers falling prematurely.

"As a result, a huge number of flowers dropped," said Mehedi Hasan, a farmer from Atghor village, adding that growers are worried about the eventual yield.

He said guava trees require adequate water during flowering, but it is nearly impossible for farmers to irrigate vast orchard areas.

"Even moving inside the orchards is not easy," he added.

Another farmer, Raju Mollah, said they have been witnessing lower production over the past few years due to adverse weather.

"Even last year, we couldn't earn



enough by selling guava because there was a crisis of wholesale buyers during the July Uprising, which coincided with the peak season," he said.

However, farmers believe that a good price this year could help offset losses caused by poor yield.

Nihar Halder, a sub-assistant agriculture officer of Nesarabad upazila, said it is difficult to predict the extent of the drop in production before the harvesting period begins.

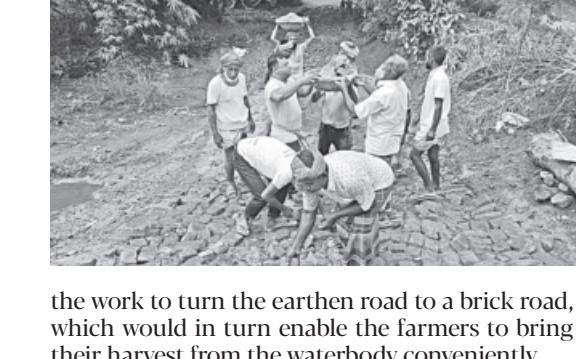
He added that last year, farmers faced difficulties in selling guava due to the

unrest caused by the July Uprising.

"This year, farmers will be able to get a good price for their produce if there is no unrest in the country," he said.

According to the Nesarabad upazila agriculture office, guava is cultivated on 600 hectares of land in the upazila, with over 1,300 farmers involved.

Most of the guava is grown in Atghor Kuriana and parts of nearby Jalabari union, while some is also produced in the adjacent Kirtipasha union of Jhalakathi Sadar upazila.



the work to turn the earthen road to a brick road, which would in turn enable the farmers to bring their harvest from the waterbody conveniently.

Some villagers contributed by raising fund for bricks, sand and other raw materials for the road-making, while others came forward with manual labour for the initiative. They aim to complete the work before possible flooding during monsoon.

"Due to lack of adequate road connectivity with Chhoy Ani Beel, local farmers have long been suffering," said Mostadul Haque, a local resident.

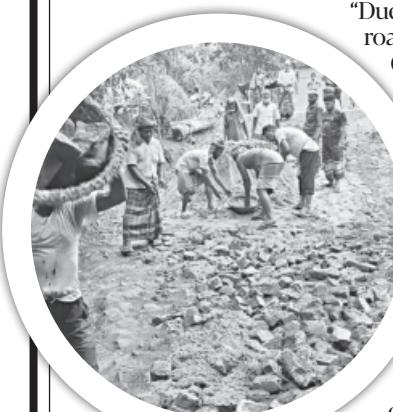
"Villagers have long been demanding construction of a submersible road to connect to Chhoy Ani Beel, but the authorities concerned took no steps to this end. So the villagers came forward to construct the road as a self-initiative," said Md Abdur Rouf, a former union parishad member.

"We need to harvest our paddy but the incessant rain over the past few days left the earthen road in such a sorry state that no wheels can run on it, making it nearly impossible to transport our crop from the waterbody," Shahin Alom, a local farmer.

"As such, we are all working together to construct a brick road. Hopefully, the work will be completed within a week," he added.

Constructed, Musa Naser Chowdhury, upazila nirbahi officer of Chatmohar, said they have a plan for constructing a road in the area.

"Local villagers have long demanded for a submersible road there. I will visit the area soon with a technical team in this regard. After getting a report from experts we will submit a project proposal to this end," the UNO said.



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