

Rift in Rajshahi BNP surfaces

Minu group to 'select' pre-determined bodies at today's council; Kabir group calls it 'illegal', vows resistance.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The rift in Rajshahi BNP has surfaced ahead of today's council of its city and district units.

The two rival factions are led by Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP and BNP lawmaker from Charghat-Bagha constituency Kabir Hossain.

New district and city units of the party have been "finalised" and will be "selected" at the council, party sources claimed.

Rival BNP leaders here issued statements and counter statements after Alauddin Ahmed, member secretary the council preparatory committee's (CPC), in a press release on September 21 called the council of the city and the district units.

The 'Kabir group' leaders termed the council "illegal" and vowed to resist it, claiming that it has been called "without the consent of a number of CPC members" only to "favour the Minu group who have already finalised pocket committees" of the two units.

They demanded that the committees be formed through direct vote.

"Opinion of party leaders and workers will be reflected if the committees are formed through election", Kabir Hossain MP said.

On the other hand, leaders loyal to Minu alleged that a circle having

"very poor public support" is active to tarnish the party's image here by making "misleading comments".

Several senior BNP insiders preferring anonymity told The Daily Star that Minu took the opportunity to select his men in important posts in the city and district committees after Post and Telecommunication Minister Aminul Haque extended support to him.

In return, Minu assured Haque that his (Haque) man -- Shish Mohamadwould be made general secretary of the district unit, the insiders said.

Haque was elected from Tanore-Godagari constituency. Shish is Tanore upazila BNP president.

The insiders told this correspondent that Minu has already been declared president of city BNP at a meeting of four thana units of the city, held at a community center here on September 23.

"At the meeting wit Minu in the chair, former city unit vice-president Alaf Hossain declared him (Minu) the new president of the city unit", one insider said. This was found true when cross-checked with another senior BNP leader.

Minu has selected Alaf Hossain for the post of general secretary of the city unit and Alauddin Ahmed for its organising secretary, they said.

Minu however refuted all the allegations, saying "these are mere propaganda" circulated by a vested

group for damaging his image before the party high command.

Many of the BNP insiders also questioned validity of the 24 thana level committees, which will select or elect the district and the city committees in the council.

Only two of the committees in Bagha and Charghat upazilas were formed through election while the rest 22 in four thanas in the city, seven upazilas and 11 municipalities were selected. "These are pocket committees of the minister and his men", said one insider.

Some "deprived" party leaders filed four cases with a Senior Assistant Judge's court here, challenging the four committees at Boalia, Rajpara, Motihar and Shah Mokhdum thanas in the city.

"In such a situation, how the council will reflect the real opinion of party leaders and workers?" a lawyer BNP leader posed the question seeking anonymity.

The last council of the city and the district units was held on May 11, 1993.

Ten years later, on May 11 last, the former committees were abolished and a 27-member CPC was formed in Dhaka for forming new committees.

Talking to newsmen, Kabir Hossain MP said the last meeting of the CPC held at the house of local BNP lawmaker Nadim Mustafa on September 18 did not take any

decision regarding holding of the council.

In a signed press statement issued on September 24, Kabir Hossain said he was stunned to see that a council has been called at a time when people in Rajshahi are facing flood.

Former district BNP general secretary Enamul Haque, now an aspirant for the post of its city unit president and advocate Shahin Shawkat, a candidate for the post of its general secretary, said separately that the council has been designed to "deprive" a number of senior BNP leaders.

CPC member-secretary Alauddin Ahmed in another statement on September 26 refuted the allegations and said the decision to hold the council was taken in presence of all CPC members at a meeting in Mohonpur upazila on September 21.

"The decision was taken as per a directive of Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman and those who protest the decision are not well-wishers of the party", he said.

Rivalry between Minu and Kabir developed during the last parliamentary election when Minu was given the party ticket from Rajshahi-2 (Paba and Boalia) seat and Kabir, who won the Rajshahi-2 seat twice in 1991 and 1996 elections, was nominated for Rajshahi-5 (Charghat and Bagha) seat.

A 'risky' RU dormitory

8 rooms of Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall 'sealed', no step for repair



A partial view of the roof of a room at Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall, a dormitory for male students at Rajshahi University (left) and students of Tapashi Rabeya Hall stage a sit-in at the hall gate demanding resolution of accommodation crisis for female students of the university. At least 1000 students huddle in the 500-seat Rabeya Hall. The photos were taken on Saturday.

A RU CORRESPONDENT

The 30-year-old Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall at Rajshahi University is risky for resident students.

Cement plasters often fall from roofs in most of the rooms.

The authorities earlier sealed off eight rooms and identified 12 others as 'risky'. But 50 students stay in those 12 'risky' rooms due to acute accommodation crisis. At least 1200 resident students

stay in the 860-seat hall.

Students said condition of the first floor is precarious. Old bathrooms, hall office, dining hall, TV room and the newspaper room give a deplorable look with loose plasters falling. At night students use bathrooms in darkness as there is no light.

Talking to this correspondent, resident student Rakibul Hassan said, "We remain always afraid as plaster from roofs can fall on us any moment".

Some days ago, a student narrowly escaped as a big chunk of plaster fell, he said.

The hall provost submitted written complaints to the Vice-chancellor several times after some students were injured by falling plasters. The authorities just sealed off eight rooms, another student said.

When contacted Provost Dr Abul Kashem said VC Prof Faisal Islam Faruki visited the hall recently, but repair work is yet to

be initiated.

"The education ministry granted only Tk 20 crore after we sought Tk 10 crore for repair work", said Pro-VKHM Shahadat Hossain Mondol when contacted.

A source said the authorities are waiting for a long vacation to start repair work.

The hall was established in 1973 on 16 acres of land and named after Prof Habibur Rahman who died during the Liberation War.

PHOTO: STAR

SNAPS

Boy dies from hornets' bite

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal
Nine-year-old Ritu died from hornets' bite on Saturday.

Liton, Bablu and Bakku three stones to a hornets' nest on a palm tree at Char Abdani village in the Sadar upazila. Ritu was standing beside.

As the hornets fanned out to bite the attackers, the three managed to flee but Ritu could not. The hornets attacked him.

Ritu's screams drew his grandmother Amena Khatun and another passersby. They tried to save but were also bitten.

Ritu was rushed to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital but died there in the evening.

Housewife beaten to death for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal
A housewife has been beaten to death at a village, allegedly by her husband for dowry. Beauty Begum, 35, mother of two, was beaten severely, allegedly by her husband Toab Ali at Char Uttampur village in Razapur upazila in Jhalakati district on Saturday night.

As she died in the early hours of Sunday, Toab hung the body with the roof of the house to show that she committed suicide.

But police said they found injury marks on the body. The body has been sent to Jhalakati hospital morgue for autopsy.

No case was filed till yesterday. Toab is absconding.

Three jailed for possessing Phensidyl

A CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali
A special tribunal court here on Wednesday sentenced three persons to seven years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for possessing Phensidyl.

The convicts are Atiar Rahman, 30, Akbar, 28, and Jiad, 30.

Judge AKM Jahurul Alam also fined them Tk 2,000, in default, to suffer six months more RI.

Police on March 7 last year raided Atiar Rahman's house at Kalikapur, recovered 30 bottles of Phensidyl and arrested the three culprits.

'Training' of Shibir members at RU hall rooms create tension

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 200 members of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) including outsiders on Sunday concluded a three-day training styled 'Shathi Somabesh', using rooms at two Rajshahi University (RU) halls.

The close-door training was held at television and guestrooms of Nawab Abdul Latif and Shah Mokhdum halls.

This created tension among students on the campus and evoked protest from JCD (Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal), ruling BNP's student front. ICS is the student front of Jamaat-e-Islami.

RU JCD General Secretary Aslam Reza said the hall provosts alleged holding of the training at dormitory rooms despite their protest.

"ICS held the training on the campus illegally for establishing their supremacy in halls", he alleged. The training was held for the first time on the campus with reported assistance from pro-Jamat teachers.

Some outsider ICS activists guarded the rooms during the training while some others moved on the campus to see if there is any student opinion against the training.

The outsiders outnumbered activists of RU ICS and unidentified Jamat and ICS leaders came in cars and minibuses to attend the training. It was learnt, campus sources said.

Some members of Rajshahi district ICS supplied food to the trainees and stayed at hall mosques at night.

ICS activists on the campus claimed that the training was on teachings of Islam, but others claimed that it was on how to resist attack and fight anti-Islamic forces.

When contacted, RU ICS President Rezaul Islam denied the allegation and said it was 'a kind of council of the party'.

He said they took permission from RU authorities for using the rooms.

Dr Amjad Hossain and Prf Zalat Uddin, provosts of Nawab Abdul Latif Hall and Shah Mokhdum Hall respectively admitted that permission was given after consulting the Vice-chancellor and the Proctor.

But Proctor Prof Shamsul Alam said the hall provosts themselves took the decision.

Post-polls violence in Magura BNP men bag 3 UP posts, AL 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

BNP backed candidates bagged three chairman posts while a dissident Awami League man got one in the election held on Sunday in five union parishads in Magura Sadar upazila.

The rest one went to an AL backed candidate.

Unofficials polls results were announced Sunday night.

The three BNP men are Abu Bakar Master in Moghi union, Amaresh Chandra Biswas in Atharokhada union and Md Oliar Rahman in Jagdal union.

The AL man is Abdus Sattar Molla in Chanhali union and the dissident AL man is Meer Abdul Kuddus in kashundi union.

Meanwhile post polls violence at Tila and Bhabanhati villages under Moghi union has panicked the villagers.

Many villagers have fled homes fearing further attack. "Many of my supporters have

already left their homes fearing fresh attack," AL-backed defeated chairman candidate in Moghi union Abdul Hai Sarder told this correspondent during a visit to the villages yesterday.

Locals said, there has been a long-standing rivalry between the newly elected chairman Abu Bakar and former Chairman Abdul Hai Sarder.

They said some people, allegedly supporters of Abu Bakar, attacked and destroyed seven houses including that of Abdul Hai at Tila and Bhabanhati villages yesterday morning and beat at least 12 people.

On information, ASI Sarwar reached the spots and brought the situation under control.

No case was lodged and none was arrested.

When contacted, Superintendent of Police Biswas Afzal Hossain said he ordered deployment of police in the area to keep the situation under control.

UNDP uplift work in CHT to be delayed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will take more time to start its development work in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) as it is yet to complete necessary preparedness.

The UNDP has set up its field office at Bandarban district headquarters and is looking for a site at Khagrachhari district headquarters for setting up another field office, according officials at its Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility (CHTDF) office here yesterday.

Besides, it is yet to recruit the required manpower, they said. "We expect to start field-level work after appointment of necessary staff and their training," one official said.

"I can not give any specific time when development work will be launched", he said seeking anonymity.

He however said all UNDP schemes will be implemented with the help of NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and 'village leaders'.

"Village leaders will play a vital role initiating any scheme."

Diarrhoea spreads in Netrakona, tamed in Nilphamari

STAR NATIONAL DESK

There was no death from diarrhora in Nilphamari in 24 hours ending at noon yesterday but the disease killed three persons and attacked about 300 people in Netrakona in the last three days.

Quoting health officials, our correspondent EAM Asaduzzaman reported that 44 diarrhoea patients were admitted to the 50-bed Nilpharma Sadar Hospital and to the six upazila health complexes in the district in 24 hours till yesterday noon. Another 241 took treatment at the hospitals.

A team headed by Dr Zaman and Dr Shahjahan reached Nilphamari Monday morning from Dhaka.

They were sent by the Director General, Health Directorate.

Dr Zaman told The Daily Star correspondent that the team came to

assess the situation and to take steps.

Another team from the Institute of Epidemiological Diseases and Research in Dhaka is due to reach Nilphamari by Monday afternoon, he said.

He said 3600 IV Cholera saline bags reached Nilphamari on Sunday and more will reach soon.

The district health officials said 14 diarrhoea patients were admitted to hospital in Nilphamari, 11 in Hospital and to the six upazila health complexes in the district in 24 hours till yesterday noon. Another 241 took treatment at the hospitals.

The district control room said there is also an acute shortage of doctors in different hospitals. Only 15 doctors are working against 21 posts at the sadar Hospital, four against 18 at Domar health complex, four against 13 at Dimla, four against 11 at Kishoreganj and seven

against 11 at Jaldhaka health complex.

A doctor-in-charge is working at the Niapkamari Sadar Hospital in absence of a civil surgeon.

Our Netrakona correspondent Jahangir Alam reported that two children and one old woman died from diarrhoea in the district in the last three days.

They are Suranjan, 7, son of Nirmal Chandra Das of Chakua village in Kaliganj upazila; Mokles, son of Mahajar Ali of Birishiri village under Durgapur upazila and Amena Khatun of Bisnapur village under Kalmakanda upazila.

Health officials said about 300 people have been attacked in Kalmakanda, Durgapur, Kaliganj and Sadar upazilas.

Health workers have been sent to the affected areas, they said.

Plaintiff sued for filing false case

A CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Most of the cases filed under the Woman and Child Repression Act in the district proved to be false.

A special court disposed of 609 out of 1,200 cases of eight thanas in the last 20 months without punishment to the accused. Seven cases were filed against plaintiff for filing false case.

The special tribunal court here started its activities from February 18 last year. As many as 1,200 cases were lodged till August 30 this year. Three hundred sixty six cases were lodged with Sadar thana, 242 with Galachipa thana, 100 with Dasmitha thana, 105 with Mirjagonj thana, 165 with Bauphal thana, 170 with Kalapara thana, 31 with Dumki thana and 31 cases with Rangabali thana.

Special Public Prosecutor (PP) AFM Shahjahan informed this correspondent that eye-witnesses disagreed to stand firm in the court. If the opponents are stronger, the cases are withdrawn at once and the accused gets scot-free without any proof, he added.

Moreover, seven cases were filed against plaintiffs for allegedly filing false cases, the PP further disclosed.

Punishment to 'rapist' UP members sought Rally, procession held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Hundreds of school students and people at Palashbari, 12 miles off Gaibandha town, took out a procession on Sunday demanding capital punishment to five culprits including two arrested union parishad (UP) members for abduction and rape of a female school student.

Palashbari thana police arrested two fugitive union UP members of Kamarpur named Shafiqul Islam and Shajahan Bhulu from their area on the day.

Soon after their arrest angry students and people paraded the streets of Palashbari Upazila and held a meeting at local Shaheed Minar demanding exemplary punishment to the accused.

The meeting was presided over by Nuruzzaman Prodhan,

Convener of Palashbari Samajik Anacher Protirodh Parishad, a council to resist social evils.

The arrest followed a case filed by the victim's father accusing five persons with the respective police station under Women and Child Repression Prevention Act. Since then the accused including the UP members were absconding. The alleged culprits took the victim to Dhaka and raped her.

Meeting on Puja

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

The Sathkira district administration has taken necessary measures to ensure peaceful atmosphere during the Hindu festival of Durga Puja.

A meeting was held on Saturday at the deputy commissioner's (DC's) conference room.

Deadlock at Barisal R&H continues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The deadlock in Roads and Highways Department (RSD) in Barisal region continued for the 15th day on Sunday due to separate agitation by R&H contractors and employees.

The contractors association at a press conference held at the R & H office here on Sunday urged the authorities to fulfil the four-point demand.

These include cancellation of proposed hand over of R & H roads to LGED, stoppage of all IDC activities as prescribed by donor countries and payment of all arrears bills.

The press conference was addressed by the association's representatives from Barisal, Bhola, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Borguna and Patuakhali. They are Mir Mohan, Aminul Huq Dulal, A Halim, Swapan Sikder, Habibullah, Harunur Rashid, Anadi Das, Ali Azim, Goutam Sarkar and MASobahan.

They alleged that Tk 87 crore arrears bills are lying with the R&H since 1998-99 in its 11 circles of Barisal Zone.

They said they will give memorandum to the communication minister through deputy commissioners on October 7 and announce tougher programmes on October 10.

On other hand, engineers, officials and employees of Barisal R & H observed a day-long token hunger strike in front of Aswanikumar Hall on the day to press their three-point demand including proposed handover of R & H roads to the LGED.

Jamalpur Jatiya Party leader expelled

BSS, Jamalpur

A leader of the district unit of HM Ershad's Jatiya Party was expelled on Sunday for 'anti-party activities'.

Party sources said Advocate Nazrul Islam, vice-president of Jamalpur chapter of the party, was expelled as per a decision the district executive committee.

Nazrul contested in the last parliamentary elections from Jamalpur-5 constituency with Jatiya Party ticket.



A two-day international workshop on Expansion of Cub Scouting concluded on Saturday at the National Scout Training Centre, Mouchak in Gazipur. Scouters from India, Pakistan and Bhutan attended the workshop along with 90 local senior scout leaders. State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharef Hossain Shajahan who inaugurated the workshop on Friday is seen with the participants.

Heart Day observed

CU CORRESPONDENT

World Heart Day was observed at the factory of Liver Brothers, Bangladesh at Kalurghat industrial area in the port city on Snday.

A discussion meeting was held and the whole factory was decorated with colourful banners reading slogans about causes of heart disease.

Human Resource Manager of the factory SU Ahmed presided over the meeting.

Among others, Prof Dr Faridul Islam, chief of medicine department of Chittagong Medical College Hospital; Dr. Sayed Didarul Haque, chief medical officer of the factory, employees union president Julfikar Ahmed and its general secretary Shafiqul Azam spoke at the meeting.