

IU teachers place 3-pt demand, seek PM's intervention

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Islamic University Teachers Association (IUTA) has put forward a three-point demand and urged the authorities to meet those immediately to solving the prevailing deadlock in the university.

A letter containing the demands were sent yesterday to Prime Minister Khelada Zia, who is the chancellor of the university, seeking her intervention to resolve the crisis, sources said.

The demands include appointment of a new vice-chancellor from among teachers, removal of Prof Anwarul Karim from the post of acting vice-chancellor and a judicial probe into various alleged corruption by the immediate past VC and some other officials and mass appointments in the university.

Earlier on Wednesday, the IUTA at a meeting unanimously decided not to cooperate with newly

appointed acting vice-chancellor Prof Anwarul Karim and to urge the chancellor to intervene.

Since the IUTA decisions, classes and examinations are not held at the university. IUTA sources said the non-cooperation will continue till the acting VC is relieved of his charge and a new VC is appointed.

Prof Anwarul Karim was treasurer before being acting VC. The IUTA decision came after he was made acting VC on Tuesday.

Prof. Karim was appointed treasurer on April 3, 2004.

The sources claimed that Prof. Karim had cooperated with the immediate past VC Prof. Rafiqul Islam in recent 'mass appointments' which created 'problems' for the university.

Besides, teachers aligned with the ruling parties hold him responsible for destroying the image of the alliance government in the univer-

sity while those belonging to opposition parties also objected to his appointment as acting VC, the sources claimed.

The High Court on Thursday issued a rule on IU authorities to explain within two weeks why recruitment of 89 employees against 53 posts will not be declared illegal.

The HC rule followed a writ challenging legality of the appointments which allegedly violated rules of University Grants commission (UGC). All the appointments were made following a Syndicate decision taken May 18 without approval of the UGC, the sources said.

The mass appointment sparked protest by teachers aligned with opposition political parties.

The university founded in 1980 employed 279 people till 2002. During the tenure of Prof Rafiqul Islam, the university recruited 86

people including teachers, officers and employees against 36 vacant appointed on March 27, 2004 another 89 people against 53 vacant posts on May this year. Most of the appointees were leaders and activists of ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, some of them facing criminal cases, the sources said.

Though the mass appointments evoked large scale protests from different quarters in and outside the campus, those could not satisfy BNP and Jamaat as they demanded at least 200 jobs for party men.

Prof Rafiqul left the campus on May 19 in the face of agitation by ruling party activists for more jobs. Some Kushtia BNP leaders were behind the agitation, the sources claimed.

The university was closed on May 25. It reopened on June 11 after 20 days, but a deadlock is prevailing since then.

Pneumonia kills 8 in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Pneumonia killed at least eight children and attacked several hundred in Kushtia in a week.

Those killed are Lal Chand, 3 months old, of Arkandi village in sadar upazila; Niama Khatun, 3 months old, of Chourangi in Kumarkhali; Sufia, 3 months old, of Dahakhula in sadar upazila; Sizajn, 10-days old, of Bheramara; Baby, 9 days old, Babu, 22 days old, of Mohammadpur, Asif, 4 months old and Pannu, 18 days old, of Swastipur in sadar upazila.

Besides, at least 100 people of different ages attacked with viral fever are receiving treatment at different hospitals and upazila health complexes.

Doctors of Kushtia general hospital said children and old aged people are mostly affected with the flu. The situation will improve when the weather will become normal, the doctors said.



Pneumonia-attacked children on the floor of Kushtia General Hospital.

PHOTO: STAR

Two minor brothers electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Two minor brothers were electrocuted yesterday.

The tragic incident took place at Dighir Par village near Benapole. The victims were Ashiqui Islam, 7 and Taufiqul Islam, 5, sons of Aminul Islam.

Police and family sources said, seeing the just concluded World Cup football on TV, the two minor brothers asked their father to buy them a football. He fulfilled their wish.

Yesterday morning, the two brothers were playing football in the backyard. A kick sent the ball into a bush behind their house.

As they went to pick up the ball, they came in contact with a live electric wire and were electrocuted.

A pall of gloom descended in the area after the tragic incident.

44 tonnes of green chilli imported in five days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Forty-four tonnes of green chilli were imported from India through Benapole and Bhomra land ports in last five days.

According to sources in the customs department, the first consignment of four tonnes of Indian green chilli reached Benapole land port on July 18. Forty tonnes of green chilli reached Bhomra land port in Satkhira on the same day.

Customs sources said a trader in Jessore imported the green chilli at the rate of 300 US dollars per tonne.

Green chilli was sold at Tk 100 per kilogram in retail markets in Khulna, Bagerhat and Jessore on Thursday.

Four cops among 9 hurt in gunfight with dacoits

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Five alleged dacoits and four police men were injured in a gunfight at Harabhanga village in Gangni upazila in Meherpur district in the early hours of Thursday.

Police arrested three bullet-hit members of the gang. Acting on a tip-off that a gang was preparing for dacoity, a patrol team from Gangni police station cordoned a house in the village at about 2:30 am.

The gang left the scene leaving three of their bullet-hit members. Police also claimed that at least two other gang members escaped with bullet injury.

Police arrested Badal, 36, Ruhul Amin, 30 and Naharul 36, hailing from different villages in the upazila.

Land grabbers asked to vacate coastal Parabon forests

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The district administration has ordered illegal occupants to vacate grabbed lands in Parabon, a man-made forest in coastal Sonadia and

Ghatibhanga in offshore Moheshkhali island in Cox's Bazar.

Official sources said the Deputy Commissioner, acting on orders from higher authorities, asked the illegal occupants to leave the forestlands immediately or to face

eviction and legal steps.

Simultaneously, announcements were made through loud speakers in the offshore upazila to vacate the lands, the sources said.

The administration order followed submission of a list of 15 land

grabbers by Chittagong Coastal Forest Department on Monday.

The Daily Star on Tuesday published a report on indiscriminate land grabbing in the coastal area in the name of shrimp cultivation. The report said 12,000 out of 27,393 acres of land were grabbed in coastal areas of Cox's Bazar in recent years in the name of shrimp cultivation. Most of the alleged land grabbers are leaders of ruling parties and Union Parishads, the report said.

Forest department officials said land grabbing increased in the last four years while they played the role of onlookers as the grabbers were influential people. The forest department filed 458 cases against 1843 encroachers in last four years.

Courts at different times ordered recovery of 921 acres of land 320 in Dhalghata, 200 in Charandwip, 10 in Matarbari, 350 in Siradia and 32 acres in Lamshikhali. But the matter virtually ended there.

Forest officials said Tk 11 crore was spent for creating the forests in newly accrued lands there.

With a view to saving the islands as well as Moheshkhali upazila from erosion, afforestation was launched in 1974 under the Coastal Afforestation Programme. Forests were created on some 5,000 acres. The islands under Kutubjome union were declared an Ecological Critical Zone.

Local environmentalists and journalists earlier staged demonstrations at different times demanding steps by the government to save the Parabon.



STAR FILE PHOTO

Trees being felled in Parabon forest in coastal Sonadia island to grab lands for shrimp cultivation.

School student killed in wall collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A school student was killed and two others were seriously injured when a wall of Zahangir Smrity Sebasharm market at Shantikunja intersection in Tangail town collapsed during rain yesterday.

The dead was identified as Mehdi Hassan Nyim, 13, a student of class seven at Delduar High School. He was the son of Mohammad Selim of Kazipur village in the Sadar upazila.

Mehdi died on the spot when about 100 feet of the wall collapsed when he was standing there.

The two injured are autorickshaw drivers Zakir Hossain, 25, and Mahfuzur Rahman, 27. They were admitted to Tangail General Hospital in critical conditions, police said.

Workshop for newsmen in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A three-day training workshop for reporters that began at Khulna Press Club Wednesday concluded yesterday.

Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) and Khulna Metropolitan Union of Journalists (KMUJ) jointly organised the workshop.

Khulna city Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman as the chief guest distributed certificates among the participants in the concluding session with PIB director general Dr Rezwan Hossain Siddiqui presiding.

The Khulna mayor in his chief guest's speech urged journalists not to write any report which will be detrimental to the interests of the county's independence and sovereignty.

Intra-party feud deepens in Satkhira BNP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Dogged by intra-party feud, Satkhira district BNP could not form a full fledged committee even after two years of formation of a convening committee by the party high command.

Frustration has gripped dedicated leaders and activists as the district BNP leaders failed to form a full fledged committee due to their internal feud, party insiders said.

On the other hand, allegations of extortion, land grabbing and other illegal activities by many of the mid-level leaders are tarnishing the image of the party, he said.

The BNP high command on June 8, 2004 dissolved the district committee headed by MA Jalil and Syed Iftekhar Ali and formed a convening committee with Habibur Islam Habib MP, MA Jalil and Rahmatullah Palash as president, senior vice-president and general secretary respectively and asked them to form a full fledged committee within three months.

Despite repeated instruction by the party high command, a full fledged district committee could not be formed due to rift among front-ranking leaders.

A senior leader seeking anonymity said, rival leaders and activists at different tiers are divided into two groups, one backed by the district BNP president Habibur Islam Habib MP and the other by general secretary Rahmatullah Palash.

The rivals are accusing each other for alleged involvement in toll collection, land grabbing, tender manipulation, illegal occupation of shrimp enclosures and drug trafficking.

The internal feud first surfaced on April 23 last year when

Samsuzzoha Bablu, former organising secretary of district BNP, at a press conference at Satkhira Reporters Club accused Palash and some others of their involvement in toll collection, tender manipulation, land grabbing, illegal occupation of shrimp enclosures and drug trafficking.

On the following day, Palash held a press conference at the same venue, where he refuted the charges and blamed his rivals.

The party high command summoned Habib and Palash for a meeting in Dhaka on June 23 last year to mend the differences. The high command asked them to form a full fledged committee by June 29 last year.

As they failed to form a committee within the deadline, 39 top

leaders of district and upazila levels were summoned to Dhaka on July 4 last year to resolve the crisis.

The feud intensified further as the feuding groups brought out separate processions and held rallies in the town in observance of the founding anniversary of BNP on September 1.

Rahmatullah Palash was ignored during the Khaleda Zia's visit to Kalaroa where she addressed a public meeting at Kalaroa high school ground on February 22 this year. The rival faction barred him even from sitting on the podium, sources said.

At least six incidents of clash between the two rival groups took place in the last two years.



PHOTO: STAR

Open trial... A police official 'punishing' an alleged drug addict in front of a crowd after nabbing him along with phensidyl from Railway Colony area in Sirajganj town yesterday.

CAESARIAN OPERATION UNDER CANDLELIGHT Khulna clinic sealed as baby dies, doctor flees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police have sealed an unauthorised private clinic in Khulna city after a baby died during caesarian operation on Thursday, done allegedly under candle and torch light due to load shedding.

The mother is now fighting for life at Khulna Surgical Clinic at Sonadanga, where she was shifted from Nazma Clinic due to profuse bleeding after the operation.

The latest incident raised the number of deaths from such operations under candle light to five in last 18 months in the city. Four women died in different clinics in the city earlier.

Rexona Khatoun, 32, daughter of Iddris Ali Shaikh of Shuvodia village under Fakirhat upazila of Bagerhat, was admitted to Nazma Clinic at Khan Jahan Ali Road Wednesday afternoon for a childbirth.

Proprietor of the clinic, Dr

Nazma Begum, took Rexona Khatoun to operation theatre (OT) at 8-30 pm for caesarian operation.

The operation was conducted under candle and torchlight as electricity failed five minutes after the woman was taken to the OT.

The baby died during the operation done by Dr. Nazma and her assistants Dr Latif and Dr Nurul Amin.

The incident angered her relatives, who, joined by some local people, attacked the clinic with brickbats causing extensive damage.

The mob caught handed Dr Latif and Dr Nurul Amin and handed them over to police while Dr Nazma and two other employees of her clinic fled away. They are still absconding, police said.

Iddris Ali Shaikh filed a case with Khulna thana on Thursday naming five persons as accused.

The FIR-named accused are Dr

Nazma Begum, Dr MA Latif, Dr Nurul Amin, Mohammad Mohsin and Utpal Dutta.

Police said Dr Nurul Amin was working as health assistant at Morreiganj Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat while Dr Latif is medical officer at Batiadanga Upazila Health Complex.

Police on Thursday produced Dr Latif and Dr Nurul Amin before a court, which granted them bail.

Police said Nazma Begum was a senior staff nurse at Khulna Medical College Hospital till 2004.

According to sources in Khulna unit of Bangladesh Clinic and Diagnostic Owners' Association, there are 123 clinics in the metropolitan city, out of which 32 are approved while the rest are operating illegally.

Most of the illegal clinics do not have proper equipment, experienced doctors and health assistants, they said.

TENGRATILA COMPENSATION

Fresh 3-day agitation begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Affected villagers around Tengratila gas field begins a fresh three-day agitation programme today for compensation and some other demands.

The programme includes, demonstration and rally in Tengratila this afternoon, day-long token hunger strike from 8 am tomorrow and handing over memorandum to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer on Monday, leaders of

Tengratila Dabi Aday Sangram Parishad said yesterday.

A fresh agitation programme would be announced on Monday, they added.

"We have no alternative to launching tough agitation as Canadian company Niko is silent about compensation payment for damage to croplands, water bodies and the greenery in the area, caused by blowout twice while drilling", a leader said seeking anonymity. On July 13, the

Sangram Parishad, after a four-hour sit-in in front of the gas field office, handed over a memorandum to Niko officials, giving a July 22 deadline for an announcement on payment of compensation.

Their 6-point demand includes, payment of Tk 84 crore in compensation for environmental loss, proper compensation to 611 families affected by the blow outs, employment for locals in the gas field, establishment of a gas-based 50 MW power plant in the area,

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