

Shibir joined by outsiders enforces strike at RU

Demand for removal of teacher Zulfiqar Ahmed politically motivated, students claim

RU CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS), joined by outsiders enforced a day-long students' strike at Rajshahi University yesterday demanding removal of a teacher of Law and Justice Department for his alleged immoral activities.

On the other hand, general students of the department staged a separate demonstration on the campus protesting the strike.

Campus sources said Shibir activists from outside joined those at RU to enforce the strike for removal of Zulfiqar Ahmed.

They closed all the roads to the campus and forcibly stopped university buses from plying. They also locked the administrative building for several hours from 8.30

am. A large number of teachers, officers, staff and students could not come to the campus as the university buses did not ply.

Officials and other staff could not enter the administrative building as the Shibir activists locked the main gate.

Classes and examinations were not held out of fear of attack by Shibir activists, the sources said.

They also compelled shop owners on the campus to down their shutters. The cadres also staged a showdown on the campus wielding with hockey and bamboo sticks.

At a rally held in front of the Central Library, Shibir leaders claimed that Zulfiqar Ahmed was a 'controversial' person in the depart-

ment because of his immoral activities.

He was ousted from IBS (Institute of Business Studies) dormitory in 2004 for anti-social activities, they claimed.

They threatened to call an indefinite students' strike if the 'controversial' teacher is not removed from the department.

Police were on the campus but they did not take any action when Shibir blocked all roads to the campus and locked the administrative building, campus sources said. Meanwhile, the general students of Law and Justice Department at a press briefing called the strike illegal, saying they were not involved with Shibir in calling the strike. Those who enforced the strike are not students of the

department, they said.

The Shibir claim is baseless and politically motivated, they said.

The RU authorities appointed Zulfiqar Ahmed on June 21 this year after examining his academic career and other credentials. If he was a 'controversial' person, he would not have been appointed, they claimed.

Many RU teachers also expressed dissatisfaction over the university authorities' role as regards the Shibir-enforced strike.

They also criticised the Vice-chancellor for his silent role during the strike. Proctor Prof Enamul Haque, when contacted, said, "We can not do anything against the unruly students".

2 pirates killed in gunfight with coastguard

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two pirates were killed and six injured in a gunfight with coastguard at Khashiatana in Koira upazila in Khulna district yesterday.

Commander Anwar Hossain of West Zone Coastguard said they traded over 200 shots with the pirates in the encounter.

The incident occurred when coastguards challenged the pirates moving in the area on board trawlers in the guise of fishermen. When challenged, the pirates opened fire and started fleeing towards the Sundarbans which is about half-a-kilometre from the spot of the gunbattle.

Two trawlers, three homemade guns, three foreign-made guns, seven bullets, 18 empty bullet shells and two magazines were recovered from the spot, he said.



Coastguard members in a drive in the outer anchorage of Chittagong port arrested nine alleged pirates yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

10 hurt as BDR, smugglers clash on Hili border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 10 people were injured as smugglers clashed with BDR on Hakimpur border in Hili in Dinajpur district early morning yesterday.

BDR seized smuggled goods and contrabands including phensidyl and cloth worth about Tk 10 lakh from the smugglers.

Sources in 29 Rifles Battalion said they challenged some smugglers when they were entering Bangladesh with goods. The smugglers, numbering 180 to 200 the attacked BDR personnel with lethal weapons. In reply, BDR fired at least eleven shots to disperse them.

BDR sources said that some of the smugglers were bullet-hit but their accomplices took them across the border.

No BDR personnel was injured in the incident. BDR filed a case with Hakimpur police station.

JCD activist gets life for murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A court here yesterday sentenced Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal activist Delwar Hossain Dulu to life term for murdering a gate keeper of a cinema hall last year.

Khulna Special Tribunal Judge Mohammad Sirajul Islam in the verdict also fined him Tk 50,000, in default to suffer more five years' RI.

Gate keeper Peter Gain of Jhinuk cinema hall was stabbed on May 9 last year when he prevented the Chhatra Dal activist from entering the hall without a ticket. He died on May 15 at Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Police arrested Delwar on May 9. Manager of Jhinuk cinema Akbar Ali Munshi lodged a case with Sonadanga thana on May 10 naming JCD activist as lone accused.

SI Moll Masud Parvez of Sonadanga thana investigated the case and submitted charge sheet on August 11 last year.



Two attendants of patients step out of Natrakona Sadar Hospital for water.

PHOTO: STAR

No water at hospital for eight days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Acute water crisis is causing untold sufferings to patients in Netrakona Sadar Hospital for the last eight days.

The hospital is struggling to repair the lone deep tube-well that went out of order a week ago, said Residential Medical Officer (RMO) Ali Akbar Talukder.

During a visit yesterday morning, the correspondent found that attendants of patients fetching water from outside the hospital. Bad odour was coming out of the latrines and other places of the hospital turning it into a hell.

Amena Begum, 52, of Katuakanda village in Atpara

upazila who was admitted to the hospital for treatment of intestinal disease told this correspondent she will leave the hospital because of water crisis. Many patients have already left for home, she informed.

IN-FIGHTING IN MAGURA BNP OVER NOMINATION Nitai Roy not allowed to attend party meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Intra-party rift in Sreepur upazila BNP has widened again over party nomination for the next election.

One faction is led by convener of upazila BNP Ashraful Islam and backed by former minister and central BNP leader Nitai Roy Chowdhury and the other by its former president Kamaluddin Master.

On Monday, the Ashraful faction called a party meeting at Khamarpra High School ground and invited Nitai Roy Chowdhury to attend it. The other faction led by Kamaludin, which earlier declared Nitai 'unwanted' in the upazila, resisted him from attending the meeting.

On that day, rival BNP activists equipped with lethal weapons took position in different areas in the upazila. Apprehending violence, Sreepur Upazila Nirbahi Officer along with two other magistrates and a large number of police men from Magura reached the spot and somehow averted clash, witnesses and party sources said.

Nitai had reached Magura on Monday to attend the meeting but did not go to the venue, party sources said.

Earlier on March 5, rivals burnt Nitai's effigy and declared him 'unwanted' in Sreepur, alleging that he was doing anti-party activities.

Allegations have it that Sreepur thana BNP committee was dissolved much before expiry of its tenure at the behest of Nitai.

Earlier, at least 150 people including five policemen were injured in a fierce clash between the rival groups. Of the injured, 23 were bullet-hit.

Nitai Roy Chowdhury is a man from Mohammadpur upazila (Magura-2 constituency). In the last election, he was nominated from

Magura-1 constituency comprising Sreepur and Magura Sadar upazila. He lost to Awami League's MS Akbar.

Party insiders alleged that after the 2001 election, he never visited the constituency.

"As he is from a different constituency and has no contact with people of Sreepur, we have declared him unwanted. A few party men who are trying to rehabilitate him in politics will also be isolated from the party", said

ReZaul Islam, joint organising secretary of Sreepur thana BNP while talking to this correspondent.

Despite repeated attempts, Nitai Roy could not be contacted over cell phone. However, his supporter Ashraful Islam, convener of Sreepur thana BNP, denied the allegation.

"It is a conspiracy by some nomination-seekers (in the next election) who do not bother about in Magura", he said.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will open the much awaited Hura Sagor bridge on Hura Sagor river in Sirajganj today. The 100-metre bridge, built at a cost of Tk 1.88 cr, will link Kamark Kanda and Belkuchi upazilas.

PHOTO: STAR

Sand lifting from Bongshai river on despite protests

Several hundred houses, vast cropland disappear into river in Mirzapur

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail:

Sand lifting from Bongshai river by some local influentials by using dredgers is threatening at least 15 villages in Mirzapur upazila with erosion.

Several hundred houses and vast tracks of cropland in the villages have already disappeared into the river as indiscriminate lifting of sand from its bed increased erosion, locals said.

Sand is being lifted from the river at different points including Kodalia, Bobpara, Rashid Deohata and Jugir Kopha in Asgana and Gorai unions in the upazila, sources said.

This correspondent during a recent visit saw two dredgers in operation in the river in Jugir Kopha and Rashid Deohata areas.

Some erosion affected villagers who lost their croplands, said they submitted a written complaint to the upazila and the district administrations to stop the sand lifting, but to no effect.

Some influential people having political clout are lifting sand as a business. They are doing earth-filling work to develop nearby low lands.

The worst affected are Bandarmara, Kumarjani, Jugir Kopha, Rashid Deohata, Bobpara, Kodalia, Salimnagar villages, Hatubhanga Bazar, Bongshai High School compound and Asgana Union Parishad building.

Besides, about 15 kilometers of the dam from Hatubhanga to Patharghata Bazar is also threatened with erosion, locals said.

Protests by affected villagers triggered clashes with musclemen engaged by the sand lifters. Several people were injured in a clash Jugir Kopha village on July 13, a member of Asgana Union Parishad said seeking anonymity.

Vast tracks of cropland have gone into the river due to erosion triggered by the illegal sand lifting, he said.

When contacted, some sand lifters said they are lifting sand with permission from the authorities.

But officials at the office of Assistant Commissioner (Land) in Mirzapur said they did not give permission to any body to lift sand from Bongshai river by using dredgers.

Local lawmaker Ekabbar Hossain earlier told newsmen that he requested upazila officials to take steps to stop the illegal sand lifting.

Mirzapur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mahbubur Rahman told this correspondent yesterday that he gave permission for lifting sand from the river as it is treated as a balu mohal (an area from where sand is lifted).

He said the sand lifting will not cause any serious threat to villages and lands along the river. He also said that after complaints from villagers, he sent a team to the area, which also did not report any major debacle due to sand lifting.

Join hands to fight rising corruption

TIB discussion told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkhira

Speakers at a discussion here yesterday urged people including the civil society members to join hands to uproot corruption from the society.

The discussion was jointly organised by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Sachetan Nagorik Committee, a committee for conscious citizens.

Held at Sathkhira Sathkhira Bar Association auditorium, it was presided by AKM Shahidullah. TIB executive director Dr Iftekharuzzaman was present as chief guest while Principal Sheikh Abdul Wadud was present as special guest.

Speakers expressed their grave concern over widespread corruption in every sphere of life. They blamed the dishonest politicians for patronising corrupt people. They also said money and muscle now play a major role in politics because of which non-political businessmen and corrupt retired officials and black money holders are entering politics giving way to widespread corruption. Previously honest people like educationists and lawyers were involved in politics, they said.

They alleged that over 75 per cent of foreign aids are being looted by a section of corrupt government and non-government officials. Politicisation of administration is also increasing corruption, they said.

They vowed to fight corruption unitedly to ensure people's rights and development of the country.

Lawyers, educationists, chamber leaders, local government body representatives, teachers, journalists and NGO activists attended the discussion.

CORRECTION

In a news item titled, '5 stripped of Tangail Bar membership,' published on this page yesterday, it was reported that Tangail Bar Association cancelled membership of five lawyers including three government prosecutors. Actually, membership of five lawyers including only one government prosecutor-Bazlur Rasheed-was cancelled. We regret the inadvertent mistake.



Four dredgers lifting sand from Bongshai river at Jugir Kopha in Mirzapur upazila in Tangail district, accentuating erosion by the river.

PHOTO: STAR

12x2