

# 100 hurt as BNP men clash with police in Khulna

## Rival factions hold separate rallies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Over 100 people were injured in a clash between police and activists of BNP loyal to lawmaker Ali Asghar Lobi yesterday afternoon at the Kalibari square near Khulna thana.

The injured include lawmaker Ali Asghar Lobi, member secretary of Khulna City BNP convening committee Shaharuzzaman Martuza, three journalists and 19 policemen. The car of Lobi was badly damaged during the clash that continued for half-an-hour.

The clash erupted when unruly activists belonging to the BNP faction led by Lobi and the city Mayor tried to remove barricades put up by police at Shahid Maharaj square.

They pelted bricks at security forces who took position near barricades.

Security forces went into action when they came under attack by Lobi loyalists. They clubbed the attackers indiscriminately. Chase and counter chase between security forces and BNP activists continued for about half-an-hour at Kalibari square and Shahid Maharaj square, creating panic among people.

Sub Inspector Shah Alam of Khulna thana who as among the injured said lawmaker Lobi and some other leaders of his faction instigated party activists to remove barricades from Maharaj square. Barricades in and around Maharaj Square were put up Tuesday evening so that no faction of Khulna BNP can hold rally there.

The rally of Lobi faction was held this afternoon at the Kalibari square with Ali Asghar Lobi in the chair. He shifted the venue from Maharaj square to Kalibari square at the request of KMP Commissioner Khan Saeed Hasan.

But the rally could not be held due to clash. Ali Asghar Lobi was later escorted by security forces to his office near Khulna Circuit House field.



Section 144 was clamped in Moharaj square and nearby areas in Khulna city as rival factions of BNP called rallies there at the same time yesterday.

KMP Commissioner Khan Saeed Hasan said gathering was banned at Maharaj square for maintaining law and order as both the factions wanted to hold rallies there.

"My forces could not go into action when they came under shower of brickbats without any provocation", he said.

Lawmaker Lobi could not be contacted for his comment.

The rally was organised as part of a countrywide central programme in protest against Awami League-led agitation for electoral reforms.

The other faction of BNP led by lawmaker Nurul Islam and Nazrul

Islam Manju held its rally peacefully at the Sonali Bank Square at Upper Jessore Road.

Nurul Islam, who is former president of Khulna city BNP, presided over the rally, joined by several thousand people including leaders and activists from all the nine upazilas of the district and thana BNP committees.

The rally was addressed by, among others, former secretary of city BNP Nazrul Isikam Manju, JCD central leader Arifuzzaman Apu, Khulna district BNP secretary Shaiful Alam Mona, Dumuria BNP leader Gazi Abdul Haq and

Daulatpur upazila BNP secretary Mir Kashed Ali.

They urged the opposition not to create 'anarchy' in the country in the name of movement. Their aim is to foil the coming election, the speakers said.

The rally was followed by a procession.

A security blanket was thrown in Khulna town yesterday ahead of the BNP factions' programmes. Ten platoons of police and four platoons of BDR were deployed in and around meeting venues of the two factions. All shops in the areas remained closed.

## AL LEADERS' ARREST Half-day hartal observed in Jamalpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A half-day hartal was observed in Jamalpur yesterday at the call of district unit of Awami League (AL) demanding release of an AL leader and a Jubo League activist, arrested by Rab on Sunday.

All types of vehicles including inter-district bus services from Jamalpur remained off the roads while shops and markets were closed in the district and upazila headquarters during the hartal hours.

Jamalpur district units of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jubo League, student and youth fronts of AL, brought out a protest procession in the district headquarters. They damaged a truck at Tamal Tala in the town.

On Monday, a dawn to dusk hartal was also observed in Madarganj upazila in the district at the call of AL in protest against arrest of the two party men. They are Joynal Abedin Ayna, organising secretary of Madarganj upazila AL and Jubo League activist Bulbul. Both were injured in a gunfight with Rab.

Of them, Ayna is undergoing treatment in Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) under tight Rab and police guard while Melandha police took Bulbul on a three-day remand for quizzing.

Earlier, Melandha police produced him before a Jamalpur court on Monday.

## UP chairmen demand UNO's removal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Nine out of 11 Union council chairmen in Rangpur Sadar upazila at a press conference here yesterday urged the district administration to withdraw Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) ATM Siddiqur Rahman for his alleged of autocracy, inefficiency and non-cooperation with them.

They gave a seven-day deadline and warned of tougher agitation for non-compliance.

The UP chairmen alleged that the UNO harasses local body members and often misbehaves with them.

At the press conference, Hassan Ali Mia, chairman of Tapat UP union, read out a written statement which contained signatures of nine UP chairmen. The signatories were also present at the press conference held at a hotel in the town.

Asked by journalists, Hassan Ali said, the UNO never released any file within at least 25 days of its submission.

Unnecessary delay in releasing files hampered work of development projects in all unions in the upazila, he said.

Hassan Ali also alleged that the UNO is reluctant to pay one per cent of the money collected as land tax from unions though it is 'mandatory'.

When contacted later, UNO Siddiqur Rahman denied the allegations and said a number of 'corrupt' UP chairmen who could not take undue privilege from him held the press conference.

"I always do everything as per rules. This might hurt some of the chairmen. I can not ignore government order in connection with development programmes under union parishads," he said.

## Sylhet education board chairman confined at office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Employees and officials of Sylhet Education Board kept its chairman confined for about five hours yesterday at his office yesterday to press their demand for a uniform pay scale with employees of other education boards.

They withdrew the programme at about 3 pm when the chairman, Prof Abdul Baqui Chowdhury assured them of discussing the matter by Sunday.

The employees observed a 3-day work abstention that ended yesterday.

The employees alleged they had been deprived of getting pay scale like others since the inception of the board in 2000. Although the demand was raised several times nothing happened.

The employees earlier agitated in 2004 when Prof Abdul Baqui Chowdhury was the board chairman. But, he could not settle the matter and went on retirement.

Prof Chowdhury told the Daily Star yesterday that things have been settled as per rules and instructions given by the ministry.

A five-member finance committee of Sylhet Education Board has finalised things with effect from July 1 as per a court order, but the employees are demanding benefits with antedated effect, which I can not approve, he said.

"I have informed the ministry of the matter", he added.

# IU teachers boycott VC's meet as deadlock persists

## JCD men ransack transport pool office

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Teachers of Islamic University boycotted a meeting yesterday called by Acting Vice-chancellor Prof Anwarul Karim to discuss the deadlock in the institution.

The teachers, under the banner of IU Teachers Association, are boycotting the VC since July 19 for his alleged complicity in 'mass appointments' done by his predecessor and abstaining from taking classes since then. They are demanding appointment of a new VC. Classes and examinations are not held in IU since July 19.

Meanwhile, activists of ruling BNP's student wing Jatyiatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) ransacked and locked the IU transport pool office yesterday to force the university administration to stop plying of all transports immediately, saying this is incurring heavy expenditures every day while classes are not held.

According to police and campus sources, a group of JCD men attacked the university transport pool office at about 11:00am. They ransacked four rooms and furniture,

damaged documents and window panes, forced officials and staffs out and locked it.

Sources said JCD activists earlier urged the authorities not to ply university transports as classes or examinations were not held due to teachers' strike.

Sources in the transport pool said the university has 40 buses, four minibuses, two private cars and two ambulances, which cost about Tk 1.2 lakh a day for fuel and other expenses.

Teachers' organisations and student bodies belonging to different political parties also urged the university authorities earlier to stop plying of the transports. But they ignored it.

After ransacking the transport pool office, JCD activists said they will damage vehicles if those ply while classes are not held.

At about 3 pm yesterday, sources at the IU Registrar office said the authorities were still undecided about the matter.

Teachers aligned with different political parties are demanding appointment of a new vice-chancellor from among them since

Prof Rafiqul Islam resigned on June 22 in the face of agitation by JCD. He was the 8th VC of IU.

The deadlock started when the government appointed IU Treasurer Prof Anwarul Karim acting VC on July 18.

IUTA is now pressing its three-point demand-- appointment a new VC from among IU teachers, removal of Prof Anwarul Karim from the post of acting vice-chancellor and judicial probe into alleged corruption by the former VC and some other officials and mass appointments during his tenure.

IUTA sources claimed that Prof. Anwarul Karim had cooperated with former VC Prof. Rafiqul Islam in 'mass appointments', in which JCD and Islami Chhatra Shibir men were recruited.

Upon a writ, the High Court on July 20 issued a rule on IU authorities to explain within two weeks why recruitment of 89 employees against 53 posts will not be declared illegal.

All the appointments were done violating the University Grants Commission (UGC) rules.



Greater Khulna Development Co-ordination Action Committee brought out a 'coffin procession' in Khulna city yesterday to press for more budgetary allocation for development the district.

# Allocate more funds for Khulna

## Greater Khulna development committee demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Greater Khulna Development Co-ordination Action Committee (GKDCAC) brought out a procession in the city carrying mock coffins yesterday as part of its agitation protesting non-allocation of development funds for Khulna in the current financial year's budget.

The procession was followed by a rally held at the Picture Palace cinema intersection.

With GKDCAC vice-president Haider Gazi salahuddin Runu in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, Editor of Dainik Purbanchal and president of Khulna Press Club Liaquat Ali,

Editor of Daily Tribune Begum Ferdausi Ali, labour leader Sardar Motaharuddin, Principal Rehana Akhter, Khulna city president of CPB advocate Feroze Ahmed, secretary of Khulna Press Club AK Hiru, chairperson of Khulna Citizens' Forum (KCF) Shaikh Abdul Kayyum, Executive Director of Nabalok (an NGO) Kazi Wahiduzzaman, Khulna bureau chief of Dainik Prothom Alo Shaikh Abu Hasan and GKDCAC leader Dauli.

Speakers of the rally renewed their pledge to continue agitation to save greater Khulna from being economically ruined due to alleged discrimination in allocation of funds.

They said Mongla port which is an asset of the country must be saved from being gradually ruined and the Sundarbans from being plundered.

They said establishment of deep sea port at Akram Point, construction of Padma bridge at Mawa, supply of pipeline gas in Khulna are now demands of people of south-western region of the country. They urged the government to make specific announcements as regards the demands and warned of tougher agitation for non-compliance.

## Acid victim fighting for life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Acid victim Ranu Begum is fighting for life at Khagrachhari Adhunik Sader Hospital but perpetrators of the heinous crime are at large.

Dr. Mohammad Khairul Kabir at the hospital said she suffered severe burn injuries in her hands, chest and lower parts of her body and should be taken to Dhaka immediately for better treatment.

But her poor husband can not afford her treatment in Dhaka, she told this correspondent at the hospital.

She said, taking the absence of her husband, for persons locally known as BNP activists entered her house at Belchhari village in on the night of July 25 and tried to violate her. As she resisted and cried out for help, they fled away, spraying acid on her.

She was rescued by some army personnel in next morning and taken to Matiganga health complex and later shifted to Khagrachhari hospital on the same day.

She claimed that she could identify one of the criminals as Abdul Mannan Munnab, a local BNP activist.

On return home next day, her husband went to Matiranga police station to lodge a case but was refused, she alleged.

However, when contacted over phone, Matiranga police refuted the allegation and they recorded a case and started investigation.

But none was arrested till yesterday, police said.

Meanwhile, Khagrachhari district Awami League protested the incident and submitted memorandums to the Deputy Commissioner and their Police Superintendent for arrest of the culprits.

Local AL leaders claimed that the victim's husband was a freedom fighter and an Awami League activist.

Sources in Matiranga claimed that the culprits were moving freely in the area and threatening the victims family.

But police said the could not arrest any of the culprits as they are absconding.

On June 25, acid was thrown on another housewife--Nazma Begum, 25-- at Haza Chhara in Dighinala upazila in the district but no action was taken by police.

# Political activities banned at SUST for 6 more months

## Students plan agitation from Aug 9 for VC's removal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Authorities of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SST) have extended the restriction on political activities on the campus for another six months.

The step is seen by teachers and student organisations as a move by VC Prof Musleh uddin Ahmed to secure his position in the face of demand for his withdrawal.

The decision was taken at a Syndicate meeting held on July 24 but was not disclosed. The meeting also decided to keep police deployed on the campus to stave off demonstration by students.

The decisions will be effective from August 7 when dormitories will reopen. As per an earlier decision of the Syndicate, the university will reopen on August 9. The SUST was closed sine die amid a tense situation on May 14 when a student was

killed in police firing

The Syndicate earlier imposed restriction on political activities like procession, rally, human chain, strike etc on the campus on August 2 last year after assistant general secretary of SUST JCD unit Rafiqul Islam Patwary Liton was killed in a clash with party rivals 13 July. The authorities also expelled 13 JCD.

The restriction was extended for another six months in January this year. But, it could not be enforced as students, teachers and employees held different programmes.

Reacting to the decision to restrict political activities for another six months, leaders of all student organisations including those of ruling parties, said it has been done to secure position of the VC.

However, the VC said, the Syndicate took the decision to ensure security and maintain a

congenial academic atmosphere.

Opposition Awami League's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) earlier called an indefinite strike on the campus from August 9 demanding withdrawal of the VC.

VC Prof Moseh Uddin Ahmed had resigned in the face of students' agitation following the death of a student in police firing on May 14. But he has managed to return to the campus on July 5 under protection of police and JCD cadres.

Since then, opposition-backed teachers and students organisations have been demanding his withdrawal.

The Students Action Committee, a combine of opposition-backed student bodies, are agitating for his withdrawal. It will bring out a procession from the city's Court Point on August 5.



Chinese company Major Bridge yesterday began preliminary survey work at the proposed site of the Third Karnaphuli Bridge.