

INTRA-PARTY FEUD IN KHULNA BNP TAKES NEW TURN

One faction to 'probe' corruption by rivals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The intra-party feud in Khulna city BNP has taken a new turn as one faction led by lawmaker Nurul Islam has formed a committee to 'probe' alleged corruption and nepotism by Khulna city Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman, who leads a rival faction.

The five-member 'probe committee' was formed at an emergency meeting of the party faction led by lawmaker M Nurul Islam Thursday night, said a party press release yesterday. It will submit its report by August 10.

The meeting, held at the party office, was presided over by Nurul Islam, former president of Khulna city BNP and a founding member.

Headed by Ward Commissioner Moniruzzaman Moni, the probe committee includes ward commissioners Anwarul Kadir Khokon and Abu Salek and lawyers Fazle Halim Liton and Golam Mawla.

Forming of a committee to probe into allegations of corruption and nepotism against city Mayor has already taken a new turn aggravating the situation arising out of sharp intraparty rivalry in Khulna BNP.

Khulna city BNP is divided into two factions, one led by lawmaker Nurul Islam and Nurul Islam Monju and the other by Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman and lawmaker Ali Asghat Lobi.

Party men loyal to Nurul Islam at

Thursday's meeting demanded immediate dissolution of the city BNP convening committee and arrest of those who attacked members of law enforcing agencies at KD Ghose road and Sir Iqbal road on Wednesday during a rally by the Lobi faction.

Lawmaker Lobi was among at least 100 people injured in Wednesday's clashes with law enforcers.

The two rival factions earlier planned to hold rallies at Moharaja square in the city on Wednesday as part of BNP's countrywide programme to protest 'anarchy' by opposition parties in the name of realising electoral reforms. As the administration imposed restriction on holding rallies there fearing clash, the two factions held their programmes at two other venues in the city.

Speakers at Thursday's meeting of Nurul Islam loyalists said activists loyal to Lobi defied a ban on holding a rally and attacked law enforcers including BDR men.

They demanded arrest of member-secretary of Khulna city BNP convening committee Md Shaharuzzaman Martuza for leading the attackers.

Martuza has no right to retain even primary membership of BNP and the post of president of Khulna Chamber of commerce

and Industry as he is the principal chargesheeted accused in CPB leader Ratan Sen murder case, Nurul Islam told the meeting.

Meanwhile, OC Abdul Hamid of Khulna thana filed a general diary on Thursday accusing Martuza and some other BNP activists belonging to the Lobi-Mayor faction for 'instigating unruly activists to attack police'.

Top leaders of the Lobi-Mayor faction reacted sharply to the move by their rivals. They termed formation of a probe committee an 'exposure of insanity' by a group of 'misguided men discarded by BNP long ago'.

Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman could not be contacted for comment as he is under treatment in Dhaka. Lobi, also being treated for leg injuries he suffered during Wednesday's clashes, declined to make any comment.

Talking to this correspondent, Martuza alleged that a group of 'miscreants' loyal to Nurul Islam attacked police to foil Lobi faction's rally on Wednesday.

Lobi, at a press conference on Tuesday accused Nurul Islam of 'leading a group of misguided elements who are involved in anti-social activities including rampant toll collection in the name of BNP'.

Children protest Israeli invasion of Lebanon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Children formed a human chain in front of Picture Palace cinema inter-section in the city yesterday to protest against killing of people including children in Lebanon by Israeli forces.

The programme was organised by the Khulna Shishu Mancha, a children's organisation. Over 200 children from five to seven years took part in the one hour programme from 10 am. They carried banners containing slogans urging the international community to stop the massacre in Lebanon.

Anjuman-e-Panjatani, an organisation of Shia Muslims brought out procession after Jumma prayer yesterday protesting Israeli invasion of Lebanon and Palestine. The procession was followed by a rally at Dakbunglow square in the city.



A child (left) among many in a human chain formed in Comilla town yesterday demanding an end to killing of children by Israeli in Lebanon and Probal at their home in Chittagong lamenting with the photo of his father Sukendu Borua, yet to return from that country.



PHOTO: STAR

Expatriate abducted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals on Thursday abducted two people including an expatriate from Ballavpur in Mirpur upazila.

The abducted are Masum, 27, son of Abdul Hye and Suzon, 22, son Tanzer Ali of Bhedmari village.

Police and witnesses said, a gang of five criminals stopped their motorcycle when they were going to Kushtia town from home at about 8.30 pm. The gang took them elsewhere at gunpoint through a microbus up.

After the incident, Rab and police started a joint operation to rescue the abducted. But they are yet to be traced till filing the report yesterday afternoon.

Mob snatches criminal from police, gouge out eyes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Angry people on Thursday night snatched a gang leader of a self-styled private force from police and gouged out his eyes at Harbhanga village of Gangni upazila in Meherpur.

Laltu, 32, gang leader of Laltu Bahini was arrested at Insannagar village of Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia in the evening earlier, police said.

After hearing arrest of the criminal, people from several villages in Gangni upazila went to the police station. They besieged the police van carrying the criminal at Harbhanga village and snatched him from police at about 8.30 pm.

The mob beat up the criminal and at one stage gouged out his two eyes.

Later, additional police forces rushed to the spot and rescued the criminal from the mob.

The criminal was shifted to Meherpur General Hospital.

Local people said Laltu created a reign of terror at several villages in Gangni upazila, Meherpur and in Daulatpur upazila, Kushtia for the last few years.

RIVALRY FOR NOMINATION BNP aspirant says party MP's men looted his house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

MA Majid, an aspirant for BNP ticket from Isharanj upazila in the next election has alleged that cadres of party lawmaker Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen looted valuables worth over Tk three lakh and ransacked furniture at his house at Duttapara Road in Iswarganj upazila Tuesday night.

At a press conference held at Mymensingh Press Club, Majid alleged that a party activists led by Rafiqul Islam Tuhin, president of Iswarganj Poursashava unit of Jatitabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), looted the valuables and left the place on the nose of law enforcement agencies.

Majid, also president of Iswarganj unit of Zia Parishad, told newsmen that he had been working for BNP for eight years and has drawn good public support. This might have angered Shaheen.

He also claimed that BNP Senior Joint Secretary Tareque Rahman during his recent visit in Mymensingh district expressed his opinion in favour of nominating him in coming election in the seat from where Shaheen was elected.

"False cases are being filed to harass my supporters", said Majid.

They come only to woo voters with promises

B'baria villagers blame AL, BNP, Oikkyta Jote for flouting polls pledges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

It will not be easy for political leaders to woo voters in the coming election simply by making promises. They are facing questions about failure to fulfill promises made during past election.

They are looking for clean and honest candidates who will fulfill promises and sincerely try to solve their problems.

Such was the experience faced by Awami League aspirant AKM Iqbal Azad during pre-polls campaign in Sarail upzila in Brahmanbaria district yesterday and the day before.

At several small rallies in three villages, people bluntly told him that neither his party nor BNP and Islami Oikkyta Jote fulfilled their election pledges.

People in Shahjadapur, Niamatpur and Dauria villages told the AL leader that they faced two major problems—lack of a seven-kilometre road from Shahjadapur to the Dhaka-Sylhet highway and power supply.

Ahead of every election, political leaders go to the villages and

promise to build the link road and supply power, but only to be forgotten after being elected, they told the AL leader.

They said Abdus Sattar Buyan, now state minister for land and president of Brahmanbaria district BNP, was elected from the area three times earlier. He is now in the council of ministers as a technocrat.

In the last election, Mufti Fazul Haque Amini, leader of an action of Islami Oikkyta Jote, was elected from the area as a candidate of the four-party alliance. But the villagers did not benefit as they flouted their promises, they said.

Likewise, Awami League did not do anything for them during its rule, they told the AL leader who invited questions and opinions from the audience.

Now, the villagers think that political leaders come only to lure them for vote by saying attractive things, many of them said while talking to this correspondent. Commitments, big or small, must be fulfilled and political parties should select honest candidates who will not 'deceive', people, they said.

8 lakh affected by manmade flood

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The Bhabadha sluice gate has misery for about 8 lakh people in five upazilas of Jessore and Khulna districts.

In last three months, they staged several protest programmes including barricading the Jessore-Khulna highway and besieging the Jessore Deputy Commissioner's office for steps to remove stagnant water from several thousand acres of land,

created by a sluice gate at Bhabadaha.

Several political leaders visited the area and assured agitating people of immediate steps, but nothing happened yet.

This correspondent on Thursday visited the areas and talked to some local people. They said the man-made flood persists only due to the sluice gate, installed illegally by some local influentials. Rains from June 7 to 10 and from July 7 to 10

inundated over 100 villages in Abhoynagar, Keshabpur and Monirampur upazilas in Jessore district. They said lands in the areas will remain uncultivated in the dry season also if the stagnant water can not be removed.

Last year, water-logging created by rains in October persisted for about nine months, they said.

The only solution to the problem removal of the sluice gate and digging a canal to drain out the

water to Bhairab river.

About five lakh people in three upazilas of Jessore are virtually marooned. Besides homesteads, compounds of several educational institutions are inundated, the local people said.

In some areas, people were seen taking shelter on makeshift raised platforms after shifted cattle to safer places.

Many people have taken shelter on roads and embankments.



PHOTO: STAR

A house damaged by stagnant water at Sundali village in Abhoynagar upazila in Jessore.

Give Harijan children schooling facility

Procession, rally held in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Over 800 members of the Harijan community brought out a procession, formed a human chain and held a rally in Tala upazila in the district yesterday demanding their rights.

The processionists paraded streets of the upazila headquarters and formed a long human chain on both sides of Khulna-Paikgachha road.

Later, they submitted memorandums to all the 12 Union Parishad (UP) chairmen through the Tala Upazila Nirbahi Officer to press home their demands.

The demands include implementation of Section 27 and 28 of the Constitution, separate ministry and allocation of funds for their development, reserved seats in local government body, representation in the steering committees in UPs so that they can take part in the develop-

ment activities, vulnerable group feeding (VGF) cards, allotment of government lands and birth registration right.

The programmes were organised by a local NGO, Paritran, run by Harijans (low caste Hindus who mostly work as cleaners and cobblers). The rally was held on Shilpakala Academy premises with Paritran President Uday Kumar Das in the chair. Upazila Social Welfare Officer Rafiqul Islam was the chief guest.

Speakers at the rally alleged that Harijans are facing discrimination in society and are deprived of rights ensured by the Constitution.

"We are fighting to ensure our basic rights for more than a century but we are yet to get those", said Paritran Executive Director Milon Das.

"Now we want education for our children. Education is becoming

popular in the community day by day but facilities are very limited," said Debala Rani, a housewife from the community.

"Many of us are struggling for education, but all schools in our areas do not allow our children", she alleged.

They also demanded a separate ministry and separate budgetary allocations for development of the community and ensure equal rights in the society.

People of the community want to change in their life. But this is not easy for them because of social discrimination and lack of government response, they said and called upon the government to enact laws to ensure their rights.

They also called upon all sections of people in society to come forward to guarantee equal social rights for the Harijans.



PHOTO: STAR

Harijan people marching streets of Tala upazila headquarters yesterday demanding enactment of laws to protect their rights.

11-POINT DEMAND Transport strike in Sylhet from Aug 13

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Transport owners and workers associations in Sylhet district has announced a fresh agitation programme including indefinite strike from August 13 to press their 11-point demand.

The agitation programme was announced after a meeting held on Thursday as the administration postponed a meeting of the Regional Transport Committee (RTC) earlier scheduled for August 3 to discuss the demands.

The fresh programme includes, view exchange meeting today and on Sunday with political leaders, rallies in upazilas on August 8 and 9 and at the city's Court Point on August 13.

The Sylhet Zila Sarak Paribahan Malik Sramik Oikya Parishad earlier called an indefinite strike from July 26 but was postponed as the district administration called a meeting of RTC on August 3. But the schedule was cancelled without any notice or consultation with transport leaders, sources said. A meeting of RTA is not being held for three years, they said.

The demands include establishment of a truck terminal in the city, development of the two central bus terminals, stopping illegal toll collection for bridges and stopping movement of unauthorised trucks and buses.

'Bring home remains of Birsreshtha Hamidur'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Family members of Birsreshtha Hamidur Rahman and different organisations in Moulvibazar have demanded of the government to bring back home the remains of the national hero from the Indian state of Tripura.

Freedom fighters in the district and people of Kamalganj upazila have been making the demand for long.

Kamalganj unit of Bangladesh Journalists' Association also sent a letter to the finance minister seeking his help to this effect.

BDR sources said, 2. Rifles Battalion Commander Lt Colonel Shaheed Musaddek has sent a letter to his counterpart in the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) to hold a flag meeting to discuss the present condition of the grave.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs secretary Abu Sulaiman Chowdhury told this correspondent that the ministry is trying to bring back the remains of the Birsreshtha from India. He said this on Monday while on a visit to a newly constructed monument built in memory of the Birsreshtha at Dhalai at a cost of Tk 14 lakh.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) also constructed a monument in memory of the national hero.

In a face to face gun battle with the occupation forces in October

1971, Sepoy Hamidur Rahman of the East Bengal Regiment, sacrificed his life at Dhalai Border Out Post (BOP) in Patrakhala union of

Kamalganj upazila. The national hero was buried at Ambasa village, 24-kilometre off Dhalai BOP.



PHOTO: STAR

The monument built by BDR in memory of Birsreshtha Hamidur Rahman near Dhalai border outpost in Moulvibazar.