



Vehicles get stuck in huge traffic jam from Hotel Sheraton to Bijoy Saroni in the city yesterday on the first day of the Ramadan.

PHOTO: STAR

RU students stage 2-hour sit-in to realise 7-pt demand

RU CORRESPONDENT

Students of four departments under agriculture faculty of Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday staged a two-hour sit-in programme in front of the administrative building on the campus to press home their seven-point charter of demands.

During the programme, the administrative activities came to a halt as teachers, students and officials could not enter the offices.

Campus sources said hundreds of students from four departments Genetics and Breeding, Agronomy and Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Science have been agitating for several months for additional class and seminar rooms, transport facilities, faculty scholarship and travelling allowance.

Later addressing a rally at the same place, the students threatened to call an indefinite strike on the campus if their demands are not met within October 3.

After the rally, the agitating students met with RU Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain at his office and discussed their seven-point demand.

Tajmilur Rahman Sagar, convener of the movement, told newsmen that the vice-chancellor has assured them of meeting their demands.

Shanghai's CP chief sacked in corruption scandal

AFP, Beijing

China announced yesterday the sacking of Shanghai's top Communist Party leader on major corruption charges, with the move also widely seen as part of a power play by President Hu Jintao.

The official Xinhua news agency reported the central government in Beijing had dismissed Chen Liangyu from his post in Shanghai as well as suspending him from the nation's politburo, which is the ruling clique of communist leaders.

"The Central Committee has decided ... to dismiss comrade Chen Liangyu of his post of party secretary of the Shanghai Committee," Xinhua said, citing a statement from the politburo.

It was the highest-level sacking involving government graft since former Beijing mayor and politburo member Chen Xitong was removed from his post on corruption charges in 1995 and sentenced to 16 years' jail.

One of the chief accusations leveled at Chen Liangyu was over the embezzlement of around 400 million dollars from Shanghai's pension fund, a scandal that has already claimed the scalps of other senior officials from China's most populous city.

The politburo accused Chen of "violating regulations" in the use of the social security funds, Xinhua said.

He was also accused of "seeking benefits for heads of illegal enterprises (and) protecting people around him who had seriously violated discipline and the law".

Chen had further "used his position to seek unnormal benefits for his relatives" and had committed "other serious violations of disci-

pline," the announcement said.

Speculation had been mounting for weeks about Chen's future after his former secretary, Qin Yu, a district governor of Shanghai, was removed from his post in late August for his alleged role in the handling of the pension fund.

The sackings revolve around a probe into the illegal investment of about 3.2 billion yuan (400 million dollars) in speculative real estate and highway deals from Shanghai's 1.25-billion-dollar pension fund.

News of the alleged misuse of the fund emerged in July and had resulted in the dismissal of the head of the city's social security and labor bureau, and several top state-enterprise executives.

However analysts said the sacking of Chen, who oversaw huge economic growth for the city in his four years as Shanghai party boss, could have as much to do with politics as corruption.

It came as China's leaders prepared for next year's 17th Communist Party congress, where Hu is widely expected to cement his position as the country's leader following complex and intriguing political manoeuvres.

Chen was one of the more senior members of former president Jiang Zemin's old guard, known as the Shanghai clique. Hu took over as Communist Party chief in 2002 and became the nation's president in 2003.

"This is a very, very important decision on the part of Hu Jintao and (Premier) Wen Jiabao to show that they are now really in charge and in a position to engage in shaping a new party leadership," said Joseph Cheng,

a political commentator at Hong Kong's City University.

"If a senior like Chen Liangyu can be sacked then this means indeed that no one in officialdom in China can claim immunity.

"This will certainly strengthen Hu Jintao's hand in shaping the party leadership in the upcoming 17th Congress."

CU student missing

CU CORRESPONDENT

A student of Chittagong University (CU) has been missing since Saturday.

Iqbal Bhuiyan, a 3rd year student of marketing department, left his rented mess at Badurtala at around 3:00pm on the day for the university but did not return.

He was due to stay at a university dormitory at night and take an exam the next day, said his classmates living at the same mess.

But Iqbal did not turn up at the examination hall, prompting his classmates to inform the university authorities.

The university authorities contacted Iqbal's family at his village home at Shahanshah Ganj in Tangail. But they also could not tell about his whereabouts.

Iqbal's father Rabiul Bhuiyan rushed to Chittagong yesterday and searched for Iqbal throughout the day but could not find him.

Kidnapped contractor rescued in Khagrachhari, 8 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) rescued a contractor of local government engineering department (LGED) and arrested eight alleged abductors from a remote hilly forest of Laxmichhari in Khagrachhari district on Sunday.

The contractor identified as Arifur Rahman alias Milan, 35, was a former central committee member of Jatiyatabadai Chhatra Dal (JCD) and is very close to a state minister and BNP lawmaker, sources said.

The arrestees are Kiran Chakma, 30, Md Ali Hossain, 28, Kajol Chakraborty, 34, Narayan Das, 42, Bijan Kumar Das, 22, Sajal Karmaker, 22, Jonny Das, 23, and Al Amin, 24.

They all hailed from Laxmichhari upazila.

Of them, Kiran is a close aide of Milan while Ali Hossain is an employee of Kiran.

Sources said few weeks ago six of the arrestees gave Tk 6 lakh to Milan who promised them to give lucrative jobs at different LGED projects in Khagrachhari.

The deal was done through Kiran.

As Milan failed to keep his promise, the six pressed him to return the money but Milan was dilly-dallying, they said.

On September 16 when Milan came to Agrabad PDB Bhaban in Chittagong, Kiran as per the instruction of the six took him to a remote place in Laxmichhari.

As they reached there, the six immediately confined Milan to a hideout and called his wife demanding Tk 40 lakh in ransom.

Milan's wife informed the Rab of the matter.

After a raid at Laxmichhari, Rab rescued Milan and arrested the eight.

The elite force brought all of them to its headquarters in Patenga for quizzing.

Later, the arrestees were handed over to Laxmichhari Police Station after filing a case in this connection yesterday.

Armitage denies threat to bomb Pakistan

AFP, Seoul

Former US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage admitted yesterday having "a very strong conversation" with Pakistan's intelligence chief after the September 11 attacks but denied threatening to bomb the country.

The conversation, aimed at getting Pakistan to drop support for the Taliban then ruling Afghanistan, was the day after the 2001 suicide plane attacks in the United States which killed nearly 3,000 people.

But Armitage repeated denials that he had threatened US bombing of Pakistan when he spoke to Lieutenant General Mahmood Ahmed, who was head of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency at the time.

"This conversation (on bombing) never happened," Armitage told a forum in Seoul, saying he believed the intelligence chief had given an "inflammatory" account of the exchange to President Pervez Musharraf.

"I had a very strong conversation with the intelligence chief," Armitage said in answer to a question at the forum.

"I told him that for Americans this was a black and white issue. Pakistan was either with us or against us, that US-Pakistan history would begin on that day."

Armitage said he asked Ahmed to report back to Musharraf and come to see him the next day and that "if they agreed to help, then I would give them a list of requirements that were negotiable."

"So it was a strong presentation." Controversy over the strength of the message was unleashed by Musharraf's remarks in a television interview ahead of talks with US President George W. Bush.

Musharraf said he had been told that Armitage made the bombing threat to compel Islamabad to renounce its historic support for the Taliban, which was sheltering Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

MEMO TO CU VC Withdraw price hike of admission form

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University (CU) unit of Progotishil Chhatra Jote yesterday submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor demanding immediate withdrawal of the increased price of admission form.

The jote, an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, submitted the memorandum to VC Prof Dr M Badiul Alam through the Proctor at around 12:30pm.

Earlier at a rally in front of the administrative building, jote leaders announced that they will stage a demonstration in front of the VC office tomorrow.

They also threatened to lay siege to the university branch of the bank concerned and resist the sale of form unless the increased price is withdrawn.

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) CU unit President Kanchan Sarker presided over the rally where jote leaders Zamir Uddin Russel, Monti Boishnob and Sojib Das spoke.

The CU authorities have increased the price of admission form to Tk 300 from Tk 250.



PHOTO: STAR

Banglur Mukh stages a demonstration in the city yesterday protesting telecast of a documentary on state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) that undermines contribution of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It also demanded removal of BTV director general and the producer of the documentary.

Pak HC gifts for ENT cancer hospital

BSS, Dhaka

High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh Alamgir Babar yesterday presented an ambulance to the National ENT and Head-Neck Cancer Foundation here.

The hospital is providing medical help for the poor in the ENT and head-neck cancer patients on the humanitarian basis, said a press release.

Secretary General of the hospital Dr Alauddin received the key of the ambulance.



PHOTO: STAR

Sylhet Division Development Council held a rally in the city yesterday in memory of those who died in the recent storm in the sea.

Woman cop killed in grenade attack in Kashmir

AP, Srinagar

A policewoman was killed and three female officers wounded on Monday when suspected Islamic rebels lobbed a grenade at their jeep in India's part of Kashmir, police said.

Militants also shot and killed two men in separate incidents in the restive region.

The police jeep was travelling through Srinagar, the summer capital of India's Jammu-Kashmir state, when it was hit by the grenade blast, said Farooq Ahmed, a senior police officer.

The blast set the jeep on fire, Ahmed said, and one of the wounded, Const. Gulshan Zia, died in the hospital.

No militant group claimed responsibility for the attack. Separately, militants early Monday shot and killed a 22-year-old labourer in Utrasu village, 75 kilometers (45 miles) south of Srinagar, said Hemant Lohia, a police officer there.

Gunmen shot and critically wounded another person in the village of Zainapora, 60 kilometers (35 miles) south of Srinagar, on Sunday night, Lohia said. The man was taken to a hospital in Srinagar where he died.