

RU reopens, students request for smooth functioning

RU VC versus rebel group of teachers

RAJSHAH, Jan 27 : After a long vacation and closure followed by repeated clashes between rival student groups and deadlock situation due to non-cooperation movement of a group of teachers, the green and gracious campus of Rajshahi University, well-known as Mattharer Sabuj Chatter (the green courtyard) again with strolling of the jubilant students. The desolate desert-like premises of the amrita (space beneath the mango trees), lichutola (ground beneath the lich trees), tea stalls and station markets have become resonant and full of life.

Libraries were seen over-crowded. The postponed examinations are being held and schedules of the already-due examinations are being announced. The students are very busy now with their classes and studies and amusements, gossips and exchange of greetings.

The university authorities are also trying hard to hold classes and due examinations to reduce the session jams. But, in spite of all these positive activities and expectation, the question has already arisen how long the peaceful atmosphere of the Rajshahi University campus will last. Because, an evil quarter has in the meantime, started

conspiracy to spoil the environment by creating anarchy and turn the situation. This quarter is getting ready for a fresh movement in the name of interests of the students and teachers of the university but their main target will be to make the coming final year admission test, expected to be held in March next, postponed or at least hampered to prove, thereby, failure of the Vice Chancellor in conducting the academic and administrative activities smoothly and then, again, they will raise their old but recently subdued demand of expulsion of the VC from his post.

In fact, the crisis was created one and a half years ago, when Professor Muhammad Yusuf Ali was appointed Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University by the honourable Chancellor after his win along with his two associates in the VC panel elections in the middle of 1994. The defeated two groups of teachers then openly refused to accept the appointment and declared that they would not cooperate with him to administer the university. In 1995, two rival groups of students, namely Jafatabadi Chhatra Dal and Islami Chhatra Shibir, fought each other several times. The rebel group of teachers took the advantage

From Our Correspondent

of the clashes and tensed situations and laid all the responsibilities upon the VC and demanded his resignation for his alleged failure in maintaining congenial atmosphere on the campus. They also managed several student organisations against the VC, and they, too, demanded resignation of the VC. Thus the situation got complex and critical. The rebel teachers group even took non-cooperation programme twice and abstained from taking classes and participating in all other academic and administrative functions. But each time they failed to execute their programme in the wake of non-cooperation of the general teachers, students and pressure of the guardians and the elite of Rajshahi.

The rebel group of teachers launched the same programme for the third time in November last in the same manner in the background of tensed situation created by sporadic clashes between Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Shibir. Under these circumstances, the university authorities were forced to close the university and declare the winter vacation in advance on December 2.

This time the Vice Chancellor Prof Muhammad Yusuf Ali took personal initiative

along with a group of local guardians and elite of the city to manage the situation. The law enforcing agencies also extended their hands of co-operation and the university was opened on Jan 3 after a closure of one month. Since then the university is running more or less smoothly, though the non-cooperation programme of the rebel teachers group is still continuing. The movement, however, has proved itself very little effective, as even the leaders of the movement have been bound to take classes and examinations and perform some other academic duties under moral pressure of the students and guardians.

The group, of course, is still now abstaining from some academic and administrative duties. To cite for example, as the campus sources informed, the Pro-VC, who is said to support the non-cooperation movement of the rebel group of teachers against the VC, did not call any meeting of the administrative committees convened by him.

So, many appointments, promotions and other problems and files have remained hanging for many days. This is hindering smooth function of the university and creating agitation among the employ-

ees and students which is apprehended to be used for creating disorder and troubles on the campus. Competent sources said that the third and fourth class employees had become the main victims of the non-cooperation movement of the rebel teachers. The third and fourth class employees' associations are being provoked to launch movement programmes in and around March, just when the first year admission tests, a very vital and necessary function of the university, are expected to be held.

When contacted to comment on these issues the leaders of the rebel group of teachers refused to comment but said that they were doing their own work.

Professor Muhammad Yusuf Ali, Vice Chancellor of the university, said that they were working day and night to resolve the problems as soon as possible. "We hope that each and every person concerned will realise the facts and truth and work for the betterment of students and the university as a whole," he said.

When contacted, students appealed saying, "We earnestly request our teachers and all others not to do anything that can hamper our academic career."



Visitors at a photo exhibition show in Moulvibazar town. More than 500 photos, both, colour and black & white photos were on display. — Star photo

Workers call strike Work at Bholaganj quarry stopped

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Jan 27 : Collection of stones from the Bholaganj stone Quarry, the biggest stone quarry of the country, has been suspended for the last six days as about five thousand workers went on strike since Sunday last to press demand for immediate arrest of illegal toll collectors and armed miscreants who had been active in the quarry for long.

The striking labourers held a big rally at the thana headquarters of Companyganj Thursday last with Abdur Razzaq president of the Workers Association in the chair. The speakers called upon the authorities to take immediate measures against the organised gangs engaged in illegal toll collection the strike would continue till Sunday.

Station master's room in poor condition

From Our Correspondent

CHAPAINAWABGONJ, Jan 27 : The station master's room and the waiting rooms of Chapainawabganj railway station for several months. At this the suffering and misery of railway passengers knows no bound.

It is reported that a technical team of the western railway had given an order to break the roof of the station master's room and two waiting rooms which were built during the Pakistani era. But after breaking it, it has been realised that it is impossible to build roof on the old and weak walls. Yet the concerned authority reportedly did

not take any decision about it. As a result, the future of the waiting rooms has become uncertain and the railway passengers have become the victim of untold suffering. The sanitary system of the platform is so miserable that it is quite impossible to pass time sitting on the platform. The Station Master and all other officials of the station sit in another room, the condition of which is also very poor. The plasters have broken down and the iron rods of the roof have come out. It is apprehended that a mortal accident may occur anytime.

Nijhum island — remains so isolated

By AKM Mohsin back from Noakhali

The government failed to provide basic needs for the inhabitants in virtually all other aspects. There is no school, health centre, post office, shopping centre, power house, police camp or any cyclone shelter.

JANUARY 27 : The island of Nijhum, some 4 hours journey from the main land, remains so isolated that its inhabitants even can not tell who is the president of the nation. Some name their local leader as the president of the nation while others keep on guessing.

Nijhum island, about 40 km from Char Jabber of Sudharam thana of the district, 30 square km in size, is the largest of its kind in the area. During the dry seasons the size of the island almost doubles while it shrinks by more than half its original size during the monsoon.

The island is divided into two main parts, Char Osman where human habitation is dense and the other is Char Kamala, a dense man-made forest having population of only a few wild life. The forest was created to protect islanders from attacks of hurricanes and cyclones, a common curse of the nature in the region. Funded by the World Bank, the project of afforestation seemed to be very effective. However, since start of human habitation in the early 1980s the forest come under attack.

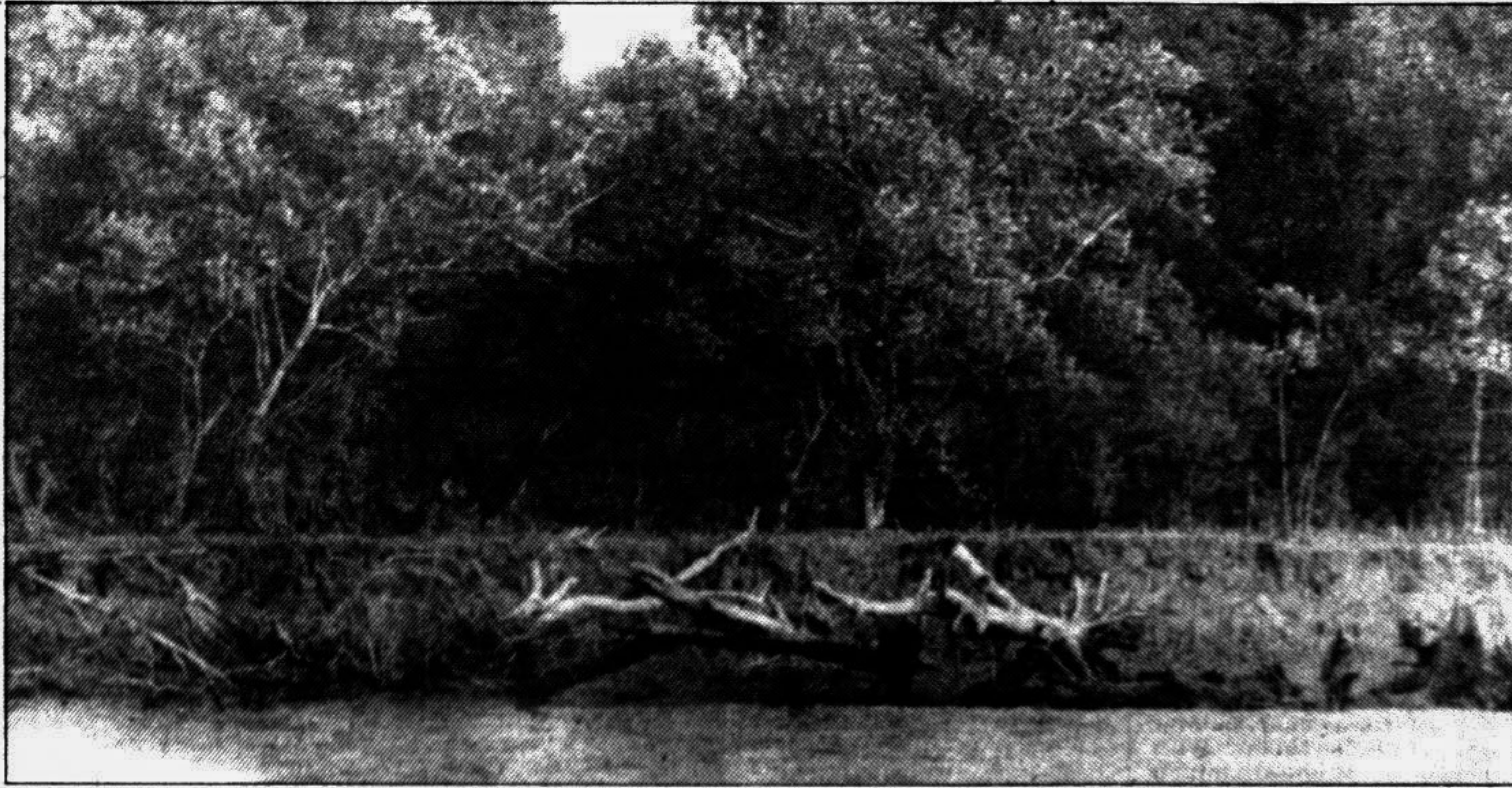
Trees are being cut for use as fire wood and sold in the local markets for comparatively lower price. A large area of Kamala region clearly shows signs of destruction. The local people also alleged that timber are being shipped to the main land for sale at much higher rates.

The island has a population of 5,600 people most of whom are fishermen by profession. The government allocated two acres of land to each of the 425 families as part of the rehabilitation programme. This is appreciable but the government failed to provide basic needs for the inhabitants in virtually all other aspects. There is no school, health centre, post office, shopping centre, power house, police camp or any cyclone shelter. However, private initiative succeeded in introducing three primary schools, one madrasa. There are five mosques as well.

In fact, the island has not seen much of development. This correspondent had visited the island in 1983. Today, after 12 years there were no changes noticed in terms of development.

The large population of fishermen completely depend on sale of their catch. Unfortunately there is no cold storage for preservation of the wealth. "We catch fish worth crores of taka every month but no one has set up a single cold storage here," said Mizan Ali, an old fisherman from Hatiya. "Sometimes we throw away huge quantity of catch into the sea simply because we are unable to preserve them," said another colleague of Ali.

The people of the island have been crying for establishment of an embankment which is badly needed. The proposed embankment on the southern part of the island can firstly save the island from further erosion, check entrance of salt water in the crop land and finally protect the environment. "We dream of constructing the embankment. We hope some day our dream comes true," said a number of people.



A partial view of the man-made forest in the island of Nijhum. — Star photo



Locals cross this canal using the shako. There is virtually no sign of development in the island. Many such shakos have been built by local people but the Local Government takes no interest for the service of the inhabitants of the island. — Star photo



Huge areas of land on the southern part of the island have been eroded. An embankment could stop erosion and save property. — Star photo

Education fair in Moulvibazar concludes

From Our Correspondent MOULVIBAZAR, Jan 27 : A day long 'Shikkha Mela' (Education fair), organised by the Primary Training Institute (PTI) Moulvibazar concluded here at the PTI premises with great enthusiasm recently.

First of its kind among 54 PTIs in the country, the 'Shikkha Mela' was inaugurated by Md Motiur Rahman, Deputy Director of the Primary Education, Chittagong Division. Trainees of 1995-96 session of the Moulvibazar PTI participated in the Mela with 12 stalls. Modern Primary Teaching technic and other cultural and traditional issues were exhibited in the stalls. Besides this, cultural competition was also included in the fair, open for trainees of PTI.

The concluding ceremony of the 'Shikkha Mela' was held at local Shilpakala Academy auditorium, where speakers discussed the recent issues on Primary Education.

Presided over by Maya Wahed, Superintendent of the Moulvibazar PTI, the function was attended by Motiur Rahman, Deputy Director of the Primary Education Chittagong Division, and was addressed among others by District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) Siddiqur Rahman, ADPEO Fariduddin Ahmed, District Secondary Education Officer Basona Devi and Assistant Superintendent of PTI Abdul Wahab.

The Chief guest of the function Motiur Rahman also gave away prizes among the winners of the competition.

Arms, ammunition recovered, 7 held in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 27 : Police and Army in a joint raid recovered illegal arms and ammunition and arrested seven people in Bajitpur thana early yesterday, reports UNB.

The recovered one gun, a revolver and 54 rounds of bullet from the house of Mojibur Rahman Monju, Chairman of Dighirpar Union Parishad and president of Bajitpur thana BNP.

The law enforcers also arrested Mohammad Angur Mia, Chairman of Balladi Union Parishad, Vice president of thana BNP and a life-member of Kishoreganj Press Club, and recovered 13 lethal weapons, including ramdao, spear and kirich.

Police said, they arrested five other people for their suspicious movement.

They are : Abdul Kader, Bhuiyan Alias Misir, commissioner of Bajitpur pourashava and a BNP member, Abul Kashem, member of Dilarpur union parishad and president of thana Jattiyatabadi Jubo Dal, Kamal Hossain, a member of thana BNP, Halud, brother of Misir and a BNP worker, and Hossain Ali.

The arrested were produced before the magistrate court in the afternoon. Police sought to bring back Manju, Angur, Kader and Kamal to their custody on seven days remand.

But the magistrate sent them to the jail custody as the activities of the court remained closed due to holiday.



MOULVIBAZAR: Md Motiur Rahman, Deputy Director of Primary Education, Chittagong Division, inaugurating a day-long 'Shikkha Mela' (Education Fair) at Moulvibazar PTI recently. — Star photo

Primary education in Kishoreganj faces multiple problems

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ Jan 27 : Most of the government and non-government primary schools in 13 thanas of Kishoreganj district have been facing manifold problems including shortage of teachers, accommodation, lack of necessary appliances, paucity of drinking water and irregular payment of salary.

According to district Primary Education Department, there are 808 government, 357 registered and 124 unregistered primary schools in the district. The total number of the students in these schools were 3,52,186 during the last academic year. As many as 83 posts of primary teachers including 24 headmasters have been lying vacant for a long time.

Most of the non-government schools established under local initiatives have not yet received government recognitions although these institutions have a good number of students and other requisite facilities. Some of these schools were set up before the Liberation War and have been running in de-

plorable condition. Due to fund constraints, payment of salary of the teachers remain irregular over the years. As a result, many teachers have already left their respective institutions in utter disappointments.

On the other hand, the government schools have also been plunged into innumerable problems hampering primary education programme to a great extent. Most of the schools have been lacking insufficient number of benches. As a result students are to sit on brick or mats. The supply of other appliances including chalk, blackboard and duster are in short supply.

The students of the schools are badly in need of sports appliances. Ninety per cent of the schools have no field. These schools do not have laboratory.

The primary school buildings which had been damaged by floods, storms, cyclones and other natural calamities during the last few years have not yet been repaired in rural areas.

Bir Bikram Yamin Chowdhury laid to rest

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 27 : Yamin Chowdhury Bir Bikram, a valiant Freedom Fighter of Sylhet died of heart attack Friday morning. He was 46. Yamin Chowdhury was rushed to the chamber of a physician when he felt sick yesterday morning. He died there instantaneously.

Yamin Chowdhury was member of the Central Command Council of Muktiyodha Sangsad and was also ex-commander of Sylhet district Muktiyodha Sangsad.

He was commander of the Bholaganj Subsector of Sylhet during the Liberation War.

He left behind his widow, two daughters, one son and others to mourn his death.

He was buried in the graveyard adjacent to the shrine of Hajrat Shah (RA) after the Janaja held in the Shrine premises.

Students facing problems in Comilla

COMILLA, Jan 27 : The students of class six and nine have been facing acute problems with the start of new academic year due to non-availability of text books in the local market, reports UNB.

Guardians said, the students are gradually losing their interest as the new academic session began without the text books.

The board supplied only English text books for class six on January 22 at the local bookshops of the market.

Traders informed that the other text books are yet to be published. They also stressed the need for proper distribution system of text books so that the students can get the same at fixed prices.

Meanwhile the guardians urged the concerned authorities to arrange supply of much needed text books without further delay.