

More bodies condemn killing of Manik Saha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Various socio-political and professional organisations yesterday strongly condemned the killing of eminent journalist Manik Chandra Saha and demanded immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to the killers.

Manik Saha, staff correspondent of the daily Sangbad, Khulna-based stringer of BBC and former president of Khulna Press Club, was

killed in a bomb explosion in Khulna on Thursday.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a New York-based media rights watchdog, has called for immediate prosecution of the killers.

"We are shocked and deeply saddened by the loss of our colleague Manik Saha," said CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper.

"We call on the authorities to

pursue and prosecute Saha's killers to the fullest extent of the law," Cooper said in a statement.

The CPJ noted that Bangladesh is one of the most violent countries in the world for journalists, especially in rural areas where it has documented numerous attacks against journalists.

According to the CPJ research, Saha, 45, was the third journalist to be murdered in the Khulna region in the last four years.

Harunur Rashid, a reporter for the daily Purbanchal, was shot and killed by gunmen on March 2, 2002, and Nahar Ali, a correspondent for the Khulna-based daily Anirban, died as a result of injuries sustained after being beaten by unknown assailants on April 21, 2001.

However, no one has been charged in either case, CPJ noted.

In another statement, Khetmajur Union President Abdus Sattar and General Secretary Saiful Haque said Manik had fought relentlessly against crimes.

Chairman of Islami Parishad Bangladesh Abdul Ahad Noor called on the government to ensure security of the journalists so that they can carry out their professional duties smoothly.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Huq Inu and General Secretary Zafar Sazzad said the killing of Manik Saha was a stark indication of deterioration in law and order situation.

Members of Bangladesh Crime Reporters Association took out a protest rally and called for social unity so that no more journalists become victims of criminals.

Manik Saha, an eminent social worker, dedicated his life to making Khulna free from crimes and corruption, said Sushashoner Jonnya Nagorik, a civil society group.

President of Bangladesh

Manabdhikar Samannoy Parishad Nasrin Sultana and Executive Director Anwarul Azim said in a joint statement that killings in the hands of criminals one after another was utterly tragic and disquieting.

Termining Manik Saha a brilliant journalist and human rights activist, Parbatya Chattagram Jansanghati Samity (PCJSS) said his murder once again points out that there is no security of life and property for commonman.

Rashed Khan Menon, Muzahidul Islam, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and other leaders of the 11-Party expressed their solidarity with the hartal called by journalists in Khulna.

Narayanganj Press Club declared a three-day programme to protest the killing.

The Human Rights and Environmental Journalists Association, Centre for Women Journalists and Bangladesh Krishak Sramik mukti Andolon also condemned the killing.

Bangladesh Christian Association, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Dhaka south, Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Parishad also protested the killing of Manik Saha.

In Khagrachhari, local journalists took out a silent procession and held a protest rally, demanding protection of press freedom and security of life.

Authorities under fire for closing RU

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Decision to close Rajshahi University for 25 days in the wake of Tuesday's armed clash between Islami Chhatra Shibir and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal drew flak from teachers and students.

The RU syndicate took the decision on Wednesday after proctors of resident halls indicated the situation has gone out of control with armed cadres roaming the campus to establish supremacy.

Teachers and students alleged that the university was closed only to protect armed cadres of Shibir who have piled up firearms in residential halls after Tuesday's violence.

According to campus sources, continued administrative support to Shibir and the JCD's interference in Shibir-sponsored black marketing of admission forms had triggered the violence.

Prof. Sayen Uddin and Prof. Abdul Latif, outgoing president and general secretary of Rajshahi University Teachers' Association, blamed the RU authority for Tuesday's incident and protested the closure of the university.

They said the closure was unwarranted and it would create session jams.

"We are worried as Shibir cadres used firearms openly on the campus but the authority did not take any action against them," Prof Sayen said on Thursday.

Prof. Latif questioned the effectiveness of the seven-member committee formed to probe the Tuesday's incident, saying that only pro-Jamaat teachers were placed on it.

RU VC, however, denied the allegation, saying that the decisions were taken unanimously in the syndicate meeting.

The closure came as a relief for Shibir cadres who feared a possible police raid in the halls, said a student, adding that the armed cadres, mostly outsiders, left the halls minutes before the students were asked to vacate the halls.

The closure will lead to another session jam and harassment, said a student of management department that has been experiencing session jam of a couple of years.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of teachers and students

said Tuesday's violence was an outgrowth of recent anti-VC movement by the JCD and its stance against black marketing of admission forms.

The administration virtually supported the Shibir-sponsored black marketing of admission forms as it did not pay heed to students' complaints, said a teacher.

For the first time, the RU authority this year has given permission to some Shibir-backed coaching centres to collect as much as 300 admission forms at a time, said a source, adding that some of the coaching centres were selling the forms at higher prices.

RU Assistant Proctor Prof. Belal Hossain said the coaching centres were authorised to use the forms only for their students.

Urs at Atrash

BSS, Faridpur

The four-day annual Urs of Shah Sufi Faridpur (RA) of Biswa Zaker Manzil at Atrash of Faridpur begins today.

Devotees have been requested to attend the holy Urs.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Crime Reporters Association took out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the killing of journalist Manik Saha.

RU JCD calls strike from Feb 8

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday called an indefinite strike on the campus from February 8 demanding removal of Vice Chancellor Prof Faisal Islam Faruki.

The JCD leaders blamed the vice-chancellor for Tuesday's clash with Shibir cadres.

They also demanded removal of other teachers who were patronising the Shibir activists.

Four JCD leaders filed four separate cases against 95 Shibir activists on Thursday night.

The accused included Shibir General Secretary Mahubub Saleh, President of Samsuzzoha Hall Mahfuzur Rahman and President of Bangabandhu Hall Rokon Uddin.

12th anniversary festival of Uttara Ladies Club

UNB, Dhaka

The 12th anniversary festival of Uttara Ladies Club was held on the club premises on Thursday.

The newly elected seventh action committee of the club was introduced in the first session of the festival. Founder President Jahanara Islam has been leading the club as its president for the last 12 years.

General Secretary Rasheda Ahsan and founder member of the club Imamara Mahmud spoke at the beginning of the programme.

A cultural function was held in the second session. Suborno Kazi, Akhi Alamgir and S D Rubel performed at the programme.

Uttara Ladies Club, exceptional in its activities, carries out social welfare and development programmes alongside its regular activities. It has been running schools for poor children, a free clinic for the poor and a legal aid centre for the repressed women.

The complainants are JCD President Motiar Rahman, General Secretary Aslam Reza, Joint Secretary Alamgir Hossain and President of Mother Box Hall Jahirul Islam.

Activists of JCD and Shibir clashed on Tuesday and Wednesday hurting some 70 persons.

RU authorities closed the university till February 7 following the clashes.

The authorities also decided to suspend the distribution of admission forms for an indefinite period with effect from today.

The decision was taken at the joint meeting of the university authorities and the police administration at the vice chancellor's office on Thursday afternoon.

The decision was taken to avert any further violence on the campus, said Prof Rafiqul Islam, students' advisor.

He, however, could not confirm when the distribution of form would start again.

WEATHER TODAY

Light rain or drizzle likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain or drizzle may occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Sylhet, Dhaka and Khulna divisions and weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country till 6pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during morning. Met office said predicting that mild cold wave may sweep over Rajshahi division.

Slight fall in night temperature is expected over Rajshahi division while it may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country, it added.

Highest temperature 28.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and the lowest 10.0 degree at Sayedpur and Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:34pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature In Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.5	14.6	78	80
Chittagong	26.2	16.0	84	68
Rajshahi	24.4	12.0	97	74
Khulna	26.5	16.4	95	72
Barisal	27.2	15.5	97	73
Sylhet	25.8	14.7	65	68
Cox's Bazar	28.0	17.2	85	82

DHAKA TODAY

Conference
The inaugural session of an international conference on 'Global economic governance and challenges of multilateralism', organised by International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh, will be held with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia as chief guest. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 2.30pm.

Seminar
A seminar on 'Bangladesh politics: Current state and future direction', organised by Bangladesh Political Science Association, will be held. Venue: R C Majumdar Arts auditorium, Dhaka University. Time: 10.30am.

FBCCI meeting
The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) will hold two separate meetings with the delegations of Vietnam and Sri Lanka. Venue: FBCCI Conference room, Motijheel. Time: 10.00am and 11.30am.

PUB seminar
A seminar on 'Financial stability and Islamic finance', organised by the People's University of Bangladesh (PUB), will be held. Venue: 5/3, Block-C, Lalmatia. Time: 11.00am.

Workshop
The inaugural session of a two-day workshop on 'Population and Development', organised jointly by Independent University, Bangladesh and Organisation for Population and Poverty Alleviation, will be held. Venue: House-6, Road-14, Baridhara. Time: 9.30am.

Lecture session
A lecture session on 'Development of human resources: Background, present perspective and future plan', organised by the Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB) will be held. Venue: IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail. Time: 4.30pm.

Convocation
The convocation ceremony of Exterior-Interiors (P) Ltd will be held. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 6.30pm.

JP meeting
Jatiya Party organises a public meeting with party Chairman and former president Hussain Muhammad Ershad as chief guest. Venue: Palltan Maidan. Time: 2.00pm.

Rotary Dhaka Central
Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1.30pm.

Rotary North West
Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 5.30pm.

AGM
The annual general meeting of Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association will be held. Venue: Association office. Time: 11.00am.

Film show
Academy Film Society will screen an American thriller titled 'License to kill.' Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Film show
Academy Film Society will screen an American film titled 'West side story'. Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW