

Manik Saha killing Journos end protest, concerned over outlaw poster

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Journalists in Khulna yesterday ended their seven-day programme with a symbolic hunger strike against the killing of New Age newsman Manik Saha and expressed concern at the posting of posters on roadside walls apparently by an underground outfit.

The demonstrators sounded worried about the posters the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party's Janajuddho faction posted near the protest venue of journalists, giving celebratory messages on the second anniversary of freeing its ringleader Tapan from police custody on January 26, 2002.

The underground outfit claimed responsibility for the killing of the former president of Khulna Press Club on January 15.

The journalists said the acts of operators who apparently dodged security watch to post the posters around the press club underlined law and order downside in the

industrial city.

Khulna journalists urged police to arrest the killers of Manik, who was bombed to death on his way home in an incident that sent shock waves through the country.

Police yesterday quizzed Ananda Saha, an expert in making homemade bombs, arrested on January 16 for suspected ties to the banned outfit.

Investigation Officer and Officer-in-Charge of Khulna Police Station Ataur Rahman believes Ananda will give intelligence leading to the arrest of the killers.

Our Chittagong Staff Correspondent adds: Newspeople staged a daylong symbolic hunger strike in Chittagong yesterday in protest at the killing and demanding punishment to the killers.

Chittagong Sangbadpratisebi Oikya Parishad, an alliance of journalists and other staff of newspapers, organised the strike at Chittagong Press Club.

CHT taskforce meets after 4 years, winds up without success

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Khagrachhari

The task force on refugees in the Chittagong Hill Tracks (CHT) met yesterday after about four years but failed to take up the issues on the agenda as a representative of Parbarty Chittagong Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and a refugee leader on the body boycotted the meet.

Sudhasindhu Khisa of the PCJSS and refugee leader Santosh Chakma did not join the 12th meeting of the task force alleging it was convened without following rules.

They had also walked out of its 11th meeting in May 2000 protesting what they said was inclusion of Bangalees in the refugee list.

Chairman of the taskforce Sharmin Dewan said yesterday's meeting did not discuss any issue on its agenda and took no decision.

"If they (PCJSS man and refugee leader) had any objections regarding the meeting, they could raise those at the meeting," he added.

"The divisional commissioner (secretary of the taskforce) sent a letter to us through his personal secretary about the meeting. It is a violation of rules and that's why we did not attend the meeting," Santosh Chakma said.

The divisional commissioner however expressed his surprise over the alleged violation of rules in convening the meeting.

The previous AL government formed the taskforce and made Dipankar Talukdar its chairman with the status of a state minister.

The body took initiatives to rehabilitate about 138,000 people identifying them as refugees repatriated from India. But the PCJSS and Jumma Refugee Welfare Association protested identifying around 38,000 Bangalees as refugees.

The schoolboy might have been murdered due to land dispute between Jafar and his brother Kashem, police suspect.

The task force virtually became inactive after that.

Meanwhile, Jumma refugees held a rally in the Dighinala yesterday demanding proper rehabilitation.

Constitution amendment

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planning to raise the JS seats to 450, including 50 reserved for women, from 300 and widen the gap between two sessions to 90 days from 60 days.

The BNPP met only for the third time yesterday in the last two and a quarter years despite the lawmakers' desire to sit as frequently as the sessions.

At the over an hour-long meeting, the BNP chairperson asked the deputies to seek permission from party secretary general for giving press interviews.

Reminding Khaleda's previous commitments, some party legislators asked for a reshuffle in the cabinet after reviewing the annual confidential report (ACR) of ministers.

They felt some people with low-levels of commitment and allegiance to the party were holding important portfolios.

Most lawmakers who spoke were critical of the government failures in cutting crimes, especially in six metropolitan cities and containing the price spiral of essentials.

Some demanded revival of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh for import of essentials in the public sector to break private sector's monopoly and determination of market prices at will.

Some lawmakers aired their grievances at not getting enough time to take up key issues in yesterday's meeting that Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain said was adjourned indefinitely.

Emerging from the meeting, Khaleda did not take any question from newsmen, saying the chief whip would talk to the press.

Later, Delwar told journalists that in consultation with the BNPP leader the schedule for the adjourned meeting would be amended.

He said 13 lawmakers, including Khaleda, Mannan Bhuiyan, KM Obaidur Rahman and himself spoke at the meeting attended by about 150 of 195 party lawmakers.

"They (lawmakers) asked for a second thought to our plan of amending the constitution. They said the party should go ahead with seat raising and gap extending plans after further examination."

He said irregularities in allocation of funds in various uplift projects under several ministries figured in the talk.

On whether the corruption allegations against the communications minister were discussed, Delwar said no discussion on specific allegations took place.

He said many deputies expressed concern over the price

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Young BNP legislator Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu sought recourse from the party leadership for frequent reference of his name as an example of government action on lawmaker.

He said some BNP leaders participating in different media programmes pegged his arrest as a symbol of premier's commitment to the rule of law, denting his image.

In response, Khaleda gave the directive of not talking to the media without the party sanction.

The long gap in parliamentary party meeting and refusal of chance to most deputies to speak dissatisfied many lawmakers.

BNP Standing Committee Member Obaidur told the meeting that the BNPP should not be open-ended, it should have a specific agenda. Young deputy Moazzam Hossain Alal reminded the prime minister of his pledge to review the performance of ministers.

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Azam Reza remanded again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Azam Reza, arrested on charge of killing his wife Jayanti Munshi, was placed on a fresh one-day remand, for the third time, yesterday.

The Detective Branch (DB) produced Reza before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka on completion of a two-day remand. He was remanded for four days soon after his arrest on January 10.

The DB yesterday sought for a three-day remand for further interrogation. In the petition, the investigation officer said he gathered important information from Reza about the murder during the last two-day's interrogation.

The defence lawyers submitted a bail petition stating that Reza was implicated in a 'conspiracy' for harassment.

After hearing both sides, Magistrate Quamrunnaha rejected the bail petition and ordered for a one-day remand.

The Gulshan Police Station on January 17, handed over the case docket and other documents involving the death to the DB.

Jayanti, a teacher of the Australian International School, was found dead at her Banani house on January 9. An unnatural death case was filed with the Gulshan Police Station the same day and later a murder case was filed after autopsy report confirmed that she was killed.

Schoolboy killed

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GD (general diary) as he did not return home, they added.

The duty officer at the police station told them that police found the body of a child near the rail gate. Hearing this, Bablu's parents went to the spot and identified their son, police said.

Later, Jafar lodged a murder case accusing Kashem, Shelly, Munni, Rafique and Shahjahan, police added.

Unknown killers knifed Bablu to death. His body bore marks of stabbing and there were bruises in his left cheek, police added.

The schoolboy might have been murdered due to land dispute between Jafar and his brother Kashem, police suspect.

Lalbagh 7-murder

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The petitioners submitted that the accused, who had been absconding for nine years, was refused bail by the lower court after he surrendered. But he later obtained bail from the High Court by "suppressing facts" of the murder case.

After being released on bail, Aziz threatened the prosecution witnesses with death to hold them back from making depositions in the trial court against him, said the counsel for the petitioners.

The lawyers submitted a general diary lodged with the Lalbagh police on January 15.

Advocate Mahbubur Rahman, a ruling party MP, appeared for the accused. Deputy Attorney General Altafur Rahman stood for the state while advocate Jahangir Hossain Selim appeared for the informant in the case.

"What benefit it will ensure for the people? It will rather mount pressure on public exchequer," she said, adding that if her party voted to power again with two-thirds majority, the constitution will be amended further in this regard.

"More the coalition government is losing confidence in people, more they indulge in machination to cling to power," she added.

In response to a question about her political heir, Hasina said the party and the people will determine it. "A leader cannot be made by pressure. My son did not come to make money when I was in power."

Asked about the judiciary, Hasina said she will ensure absolute independence of the judiciary if her party returns to power.

Kids in fetters

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remains ignored when they are produced before the court and thus they end up in prison, some legal experts said. Sometimes, police also use the age of a juvenile while producing before a court to avoid legal complications, they added.

Called for revamping the central jail authorities claimed they send a juvenile to the correction centre at Tongi whenever they receive a court order to do so. Sources, however, said there are exceptions, as there are five cases at present where the accused children are still inside the jail even after the court ordered them to be sent to the correction centre. "Thirteen-year-old Rafique has been in central jail since November 19, 2003, though the court ordered to send him to the National Correction Centre at Tongi," said a social worker, preferring anonymity.

"Sometimes, we can't send a juvenile to