

'No academic activity at IU till VC's removal'

Teachers announce at rally, demand probe into alleged corruption by VC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Leaders of the Bidibidhan Sangrakkhan Committee (BBSC), a body Islamic University teachers, at a rally in the town yesterday said they will not resume academic activities at the institution till the "corrupt and inefficient" vice-chancellor is removed.

They said they are firm on their demand and urged the Prime Minister to intervene and remove VC Prof Mustafizur Rahman in the interest of the university and its students. The PM is the chancellor of the university.

They also demanded probe into the alleged corruption by the VC during his two and a half years' tenure.

The rally, held at the Public Library ground, was addressed by, among others, Dr. Abul Ahsan Chowdhury, Dr. Ali Noor Rahman, Dr. ANM Rejaul Karim, Dr. Kamaluddin, Dr. Shawkat Jahangir, Dr. Tahir Ahmed and Dr. Zakir Hossain.

BBSC Convener Dr. Ashraf Ali presided over the rally, attended by about 100 teachers and a large number of students.

Earlier, the teachers gathered at the Customs Mor and marched the streets up to the Public Library ground.

The rally and the procession were part of a three-day

programme announced at a BBSC meeting on Saturday to press its demand for resignation of the vice-chancellor.

The BBSC will form a human chain at Kushtia town today and stage two hours' token hunger strike on the Public Library premises tomorrow.

At Saturday's meeting held at the university club with its Prof Ashraf Ali in the chair also drew the Prime Minister's attention to the stalemate in the interest of about 9000 students.

Classes are not held in the university since January as majority of the teachers and all the students are demanding the VC's resignation.

On the other hand, teachers supporting Jamaat-e-Islami on Saturday held a rally on the campus in support of the VC.

A large number of Islam Chhatra Sibir (ICS) activists also joined the rally.

The rally demand IU Treasurer Prof Mosarraf Hossain's resignation.

Prof Mosarraf Hossain, president of IU unit of Zia Parishad, is among those demanding the VC's resignation.

Sources on the campus said the university situation may deteriorate if the pro-VC group also announce agitation programme.

RU to appoint 289 employees 'bypassing rule'

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Rajshahi University (RU) authorities are allegedly preparing to recruit 289 third and fourth class employees without prior notice and proper scrutiny.

Outsiders belonging to the alliance government's student fronts -- Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islamic Chhatra Shibir-- (ICS) and (JCD) -- laid a siege to the Registrar's office on Saturday in an apparent bid to keep in force the authority's decision to appoint 136 third class and 153 fourth class employees, sources claimed.

If the decision is carried out, most of these staff would be recruited under direct 'political pressure from local BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, influential teachers and trade union leaders', they added.

The university authorities prepared the list earlier but failed to announce it despite pressure from different groups.

RU Vice-Chancellor Prof Faisal Islam Faruki and Pro-VC Prof KAM Shahadat Hossain Mondal were sitting across the table to decide on the issue till the writing of this report at 6:00 pm Saturday.

When contacted, Pro-VC KAM Shahadat Hossain Mondal said the RU authorities have not given any appointment, but the process was underway.

Meanwhile, additional police forces were deployed in front of the Registrar's office to avert any untoward incident.

Salt mixed with Urea, cement with TSP

IRRI-Boro on 50,000 acres turn yellowish in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

IRRI-Boro on about 50,000 acres in Akhaura upazila have turned yellowish due to use of adulterated fertiliser, farmers have alleged.

A section of dishonest traders are mixing salt with Urea, cement with TSP and pebbles with MP fertiliser, they alleged while talking to this correspondent during a recent visit to some of the affected areas in the upazila.

The traders are also selling low quality SSP in the name TSP.

The badly affected areas are Mosjidpara, Akaura

Magura, Moniond, South Dharkhar and North Dharkhar villages.

The farmers said they complained to the local officials, but to no effect.

When contacted fertiliser trader Nurul Amin said he bought fertiliser bags packed in factory and told those without opening.

Gaibandha, Gobindaganj municipal polls on May 6,8

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Municipal election in Gaibandha and Gobindaganj will be held on May 6 and May 8 respectively.

As per the schedule declared by the Election Commission, the last date for submitting nomination paper is April 11. Scrutiny will take place on April 12. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is April 19.

Additional District Magistrate Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal will be the Returning Officer for Gaibandha and Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) AKM Mizanur Rahman for Gobindaganj.

Deputy Commissioner Tapon Chandra Majumder will act as coordinator.

Teachers' expulsion from SSC exam protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The Mymensingh unit of National Teachers and Employees Front (NTEF) brought out a procession in the town on Saturday protesting the "illegal expulsion" of four teachers from SSC examination halls and alleged misbehavior with them by Additional Deputy Commissioner SM Ashfaq Hossain.

Its leaders also held a press conference at Mymensingh Press Club and submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commission (DC) demanding remedial steps.

At the press conference, they said four teachers were on duty at Edward Institution on March 4. They were Md Ershad Ali, Md Iqbal Noor, Rawshon Ara Begum and Jushna Rani Das of Hazi Jalal Uddin Precadet and High School.

They alleged that the ADC during a visit expelled the four teachers without any specific cause and asked them to leave the centre immediately.

They condemned the alleged misbehaviour and demanded withdrawal of the expulsion order and threatened of boycott of the SSC examination for non-compliance.

When contacted, SM Ashfaq Hossain said he took the expulsion decision as per rule and denied having misbehaved with the teachers.

Midnight mass eviction

Armed goons evict 400 dwellers from Achchya slum in Ctg, loot goods

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Hired goons in a seven-hour raid forced over 400 families out of a huge slum in the city in the early hours of Saturday.

The armed miscreants unleashed a reign of terror, opening fire and threatening the slum dwellers with death unless they vacate houses at the Achchiya Colony, victims and police said.

The slum is on a disputed land adjoining Muradpur Mirzerpole area under Panchlaish thana.

They said the incident resulted from a dispute between one Nazu Mia and his five step-brothers over ownership of the land.

The victims alleged that over one hundred armed goons came at around 2 AM, allegedly on orders

from Nazu Mia. They forced them out and also looted goods from the evacuated houses.

They also blamed police for delayed appearance and not going into action against the miscreants.

Agitated people later brought out processions and chanted slogans against Nazu Mia and police.

Police claimed that they rushed to the spot immediately after receiving information. The miscreants opened fire, they said.

Police said that there was a long-drawn dispute over the land between Nazu Mia and his five step brothers including Zahurul Alam Shafi, Vice-president of Chittagong City unit of Jatiya Party, over the hugeland.

They said, Achchiya Begum,

mother of Shafi, owned the land while Nazu Mia, son of Laila Begum, was allegedly deprived of the property.

Nazu also filed five GDs in this connection. His resentment might have led to yesterday's incident, police said.

On the other hand, Nazu's steps brothers alleged that Nazu grabbed some 182 decimal land of the colony through forged documents and already sold them at a nominal price of Tk. 3 lakh to a notorious criminal, Ahmadya Chairman of Satkania.

The evicted people alleged the armed cadres of Ahmadya, also an accused in the sensational business magnet Jamal Uddin abduction case, made the attack.

'Stern action against police failure' Brahmanbaria SP tells anti-drug meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

It was a unique event in the small town. The police chief joined the people in raising voices against drug use and drug peddling.

Over 1000 people from all classes joined a meeting, jointly organised by residents of Madda and the Brahmanbaria Anti-drug Committee. It was held at Brahmanbaria upazila auditorium on Thursday.

Brahmanbaria SP ATM Tarek was chief guest and Sadar upazila UNO Gulam Mustafa was special guest at the meeting presided over by Master Abdul Mazed.

It was also addressed by, among other, the Committee's president advocate Tanvir Bhuiyan, senior vice-president Alhaj Abul Fayed, vice-president Mawlan Sajidur Rahman, secretary Jamal Uddin Ahmed and Sadar than OC Md Ismail.

They were in one voice against



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of the anti-drug meeting held at Brahmanbaria.

drug.

"Stern action will be taken if any policeman is found helping or sheltering any drug peddler", the SP declared amid cheers from the crowd.

Responding to complaints about policemen sheltering drug peddlers, the SP urged the people to

identify and nab them.

Other speakers earlier said drug use increase in the town, particularly by a section of youths, as these are sold almost openly at certain places. This is destroying the young generation, they said.

The people demanded steps within seven days to stop drug use.

SNAPS

2 killed in road mishaps

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Two persons were killed in road accidents in Magura Sadar upazila yesterday.

Sariful, 20, of Narua village in Baliakandi upazila of Rajbari district was killed on the spot when an autotempo hit him at Baralidah on the Rannagar-Radhnagar road at about noon.

Septuagenarian Shafiuddin of Jagdal village was crushed under the wheels of truck while he was crossing the Magura-Jessore road at Katakhalhi at about 11 am.

The truck driver sped away.

Abducted youth rescued in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

College student Jahidul Islam, who was abducted on March 17 for ransom, was rescued Saturday night from a field at Bhadalia in the Sadar upazila.

Police rescued him after an anonymous caller told them on phone that Islam lying in the filed there. Police found his hands tied behind.

Some sources claimed that the victim's family paid Tk 50,000 ransom. But the victim's family declined to either confirm or deny this.

Islam, a student of Kushtia Islamia College, was abducted by a gang from Udiabari in the town while he was going home. The abductors later demanded Tk 2 lakh ransom.

A case was filed with the Sadar thana but none of the abductors could be arrested till yesterday.

Body of Bangladeshi handed over to BDR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhir

The body of a Bangladeshi, found in 24 Parganas district in India on March 15, was handed to BDR by BSF on Saturday after a flag meeting.

The flag meeting was held at the zero point near Taluigachha in the Sadar upazila.

Police said, Ganesh Mitra, 32, son of Kena Mitra of Kera Gachhi village in Kalaroa went to India on March 15. His body was found on March 16. The body Ganesh has been handed over relatives, police said yesterday.

35 MW load shedding in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal.

Frequent load shading amid a hot and humid weather has made life miserable in Barisal city.

SSC and HSC examinees are the worst sufferers.

Power Development Board (PDB) sources here said the national grid supplies only 17 to 20 MW power to Barisal zone against the peak hour demand of over 55 MW, including 35 MW in Barisal city.

So, load shading is going on in all the 18 major transmission lines in the region.

The Barisal Diesel Power Station and the two units of Gas Turbine Power Station supplies 4 MW and 30 MW power to the national grid.

Barguna gets power supply from Patuakhali and Bhola depends on its own generation of 2 megawatts.

Water supply in the city is greatly affected by loadshedding, city corporation sources said.

Private clinics and commercial centres use generators but government hospitals have no such facility.

Irrigation for IRRI-Boro cultivation in the entire region is being greatly affected due to frequent power outage.



PHOTO: STAR

People brought out a procession at Amlain Kushtia recently hailing the government's approval of the Sagarkhali-Barabila Basin Project.

Farmers pin hope on Sagarkhali project

16,000 acres to be flood-free in 4 dists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

People of all classes, farmers in particular, welcomed the ECNEC's recent approval of the Tk.87.20 crore Sagarkhali-Barabila Basin Project (SBBP) in Kushtia.

Jubilant farmers, joined by others, brought out a procession in Amla in Kushtia hailing the decision that will fulfil the long cherished desire of about 10 lakh farmers in four districts including Jhenidah, Chuadanga and Magura.

Work on the project has already

started. It is scheduled to be completed next year.

Two kilometres of embankment and for big sluice gates will be constructed under the project in Mirpur upazila in Kushtia.

This will make about 16,000 hectares of land flood-free in Mirpur, Daulatpur and Bheramara in Kushtia, and Shreepur and Sadar upazila in Magura districts.

More 41,000 hectares of land will be brought under Irri-Boro cultivation under GK project in the four districts.

The past Awami League government had formed a committee in December 1998 for a feasibility study on the project. The committee submitted a report in 1999 recommending construction of the project.

AED (Agriculture Extension Department) sources here said additional 2.8 lakh tonnes of food grains will be produced every year once the project is completed.

"We had long been waiting for the project as this will stop flooding", said farmer Akbar Ali at Amla.

A lifebuoy for the poor

200 patients get free treatment daily in remote shoals

KM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

Every day, several hundred poor people come to the floating Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital, now anchored at Char Baitkmari in the Brahmaputra in Gaibandha.

They return happy after free treatment.

The hospital provides free medical service in distant and inaccessible shoal areas where poor people are deprived of such facilities.

The 145-feet vessel was donated by the Hospital Association of France for charitable medical services in shoal areas of Bangladesh. It was commissioned in 1995 and inaugurated by Mother Teresa.

The hospital began its service in Narayanganj in 2001. Since then, it is drifting on rivers, anchoring at different places.

"Arranging funds to keep the hospital running is our major problem", its Executive Director Runa Khan told this correspondent during a recent visit.

"Our annual budget is Tk 80 to 85 lakh. We are raising funds from individuals and organisations".

The Lever Brothers (Bangladesh) Ltd and the Friendship Hospital are jointly funding the only floating hospital in Bangladesh.

There are two full time MBBS doctors on the vessel and efforts are on for another doctor, she said.

The two doctors have to attend up to 200 patients daily.

"We call specialist doctors from Dhaka after every 15 days for treatment of critical patients who need surgery. The specialist doctors give voluntarily service, said a doctor.

The hospital authorities also run free satellite clinics in distant shoal areas.

They also give the people knowledge about primary healthcare.

Dr Feroza Khatun attends patients at one such satellite clinic at remote Khamar Bashpata in Ashtomir Char in Kurigram, about 10 kilometres from the floating hospital.

"People of the area eagerly look forward for our arrival," said Dr Feroza.

Appreciating the services, Abdur Razzak said, "I have no language to tell you what they (the floating hospital) are doing".

Carpenter Kabir of Gideri village in Gaibandha Sadar had a cleft-lip operation at the hospital. "I am very grateful to them", he said.



People throng the pontoon before entering the Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital, now anchored at Char Baitkmari in Gaibandha.