

NSI excess sparks protest

Journalists demonstrate in dists demanding withdrawal of false case and punishment to culprits

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Journalists across the country yesterday protested Thursday's attack on photojournalists by the National Security Intelligence (NSI) personnel in Dhaka.

The NSI men's atrocities sparked angry demonstrations and rallies in several divisional and district headquarters.

Nine lensmen of different national dailies were injured, three of them critically, when NSI men swooped on photojournalists in front of their Shegunbagicha office in the capital on Thursday.

The trouble ensued when Enamul Kabir of the Janakantha was on professional work, taking a photograph of graffiti on the newly painted boundary wall of the NSI office.

About 50 NSI men came on the street in front of their office, indiscriminately beat photojournalists who gathered there on information while crowds and policemen looked on.

The incident triggered demonstrations by journalists and photojournalists in Dhaka on Thursday and Friday, protesting the atrocities by NSI men.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Rajshahi:

Journalists and photojournalists in Rajshahi staged angry demonstrations and held a rally yesterday in protest against Thursday's attack on their colleagues in Dhaka. The demonstrators, joined by other professionals and cultural activists, demanded punishment to the NSI men involved in the attack. They marched the city streets and shouted slogans demanding an end to repression on journalists in different areas of the country. Journalist leaders at the rally at Shaheb Bazar also condemned filing of case by NSI men against the photographers and demanded its immediate withdrawal.

The speakers said the NSI men acted against the spirit of the Constitution by obstructing photojournalists from discharging their professional duties.

Prothom Alo's staff photojournalist in Rajshahi Azhar Uddin chaired the rally, organised by Rajshahi unit of Bangladesh Photojournalists' Association.

The rally was addressed by, among others, Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad Convenor Zamat Khan, Prof Dr Sujit Sarker of Rajshahi University (RU), the Sonali Shangbad News Editor Hasan Millat, Metropolitan Press Club General Secretary Anisuzzaman and the Samakal photo journalist Abdul Zabid Apu.



Journalists brought out processions yesterday in Mymensingh town (top) and Rajshahi city protesting Thursday's atrocious attack on working photojournalists by NSI men in Dhaka.

Jatiya Sangbadik Sangstha Rajshahi unit general secretary Rafiq Alam, Rajshahi Journalist Union General Secretary Zamilur Rahman Dulal, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists Joint Secretary General Rejaul Karim Raju and Sangbadpathro Karmochari Union General Secretary Abdul Bashir also spoke at the rally.

The rally was conducted by journalist and human rights activist Jahangir Alam Akash.

The speakers demanded government steps to stop recurrence of such incidents.

The protesters also demanded an impartial probe into the matter, an apology from NSI men involved in the attack and compensation for the injured photojournalists whose cameras were snatched away and motorbikes damaged during the attack.

The Progressive Teachers Association (PTA) of RU yesterday

in a statement expressed deep concern at the attack on working photojournalists.

They termed the attack an exposition of "undemocratic attitude" of the government and demanded exemplary punishment of the persons responsible.

The Metropolitan Press Club, Rajshahi Press Club and other newsmen's organisations here also condemned the attack.

NSI Constable Mohammad Sanaulah filed the case accusing some 20 photojournalists including Enamul Kabir, Sheikh Mamun, Anis Ahmed, Meer Ahmed Miru and Wahid Hasan Raja for 'entering into the NSI premises without prior permission'.

Our Mymensingh Correspondent Reports: The Mymensingh unit of Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association (BPJA) brought out a procession in the town yesterday protesting Thursday's incident in

Dhaka.

The procession brought out from local press club auditorium paraded the main thoroughfares of the town.

Earlier, a protest meeting was held at the press club auditorium with Zillur Rahman Khan, Publicity and Publication Secretary of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity in the chair.

Nazib Ashraf and Adiluzzaman Adil, president and secretary of Mymensingh BPJA; its leaders Biplob Guha Manik, Kazi Munna, Puluk and Ataul Karim Khokon; Mymensingh Sangbadik Samity General Secretary Saiful Islam, Mir Golam Mustafa of Samokal, Babul Hossain of Janakantha, Abul Hasim of Dainik Jahan, among other, addressed the rally.

They demanded immediate withdrawal of the false case filed against the photojournalists regarding Thursday's incident. They also demanded punishment of the NSI

men involved in the attack. The attack on the journalists by NSI men is an attack on press freedom they said and demanded government steps to stop repeat of such incidents in future.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Chittagong:

Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) yesterday strongly protested the attack on photojournalists by NSI men.

At a press statement the CUJ leaders said, the physical assault of journalists in the capital was an indication to the sort of freedom of the press and newsmen enjoy in the country.

They said NSI men are supposed to ensure national security and safety. The assault of journalists has now raised a question about their (NSI men's) role in maintaining security and safety.

The CUJ leaders demanded exemplary punishment of the persons responsible for the attack and compensation to the journalists.

The signatories included CUJ President Mostaque Ahmed and General Secretary Shahid Ul Alam. Leaders of Chittagong Press Club in a separate statement condemned the attack and expressed concern about press freedom in the country.

The government has not yet taken any action against the NSI men for their uncalled for and unprovoked action on photojournalists while they were doing their professional work. This shows the government's attitude as regards press freedom, the statement said.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Sylhet Sylhet Press Club President Muktabis Un Noor and General Secretary Ahmed Nur in a joint statement condemned Thursday's attack on photojournalists in Dhaka, terming it an attack on the media.

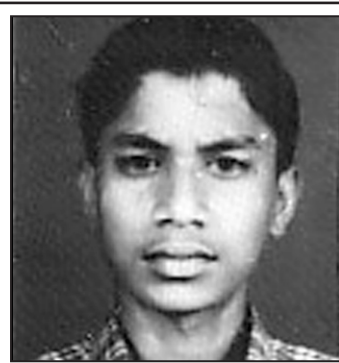
They expressed grave concern and said such attack during professional work reflects government attitude towards press freedom.

They called upon the government to take measures against those responsible for the attack. They also demanded steps to stop such incident.

The Sylhet divisional unit of Bangladesh Photojournalists Association also strongly condemned the attack and said it is an attack on the profession journalism.

They also demanded withdrawal of the false case lodged by the NSI against the photojournalists and threatened of tougher agitation.

The statement was signed by its president Ataur Rahman Ata and general Secretary Abdul Batin Faisal.



Plabon's results bring tears for classmates

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The SSC results published yesterday brought cheers for many across the country but tears for classmates of Plabon.

Meritorious student Rejbul Huq Plabon secured GPA-5 in the examination, but he is no more to see it. He had appeared at the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination from SM Pilot High School in Palashbari.

He was beaten allegedly by BNP activists following their clash with Jamaat-e-Islami at Palashbari on June 14.

All the examinees thronged the school yesterday morning to know their results. On receipt of Plabon's brilliant result, most of his classmates broke into tears.

The school students, joined by guardians and other people later brought out procession in the small town demanding trial of Plabon's murder and punishment of the killers.

On June 14, Plabon was caught allegedly by some BNP activists when he was shopping. He was fatally injured in beating by them. He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died next day.

Ferry soon to link Roumari, Rajibpur with Kurigram

Long cherished hopes of 1.5 lakh people to come true

RAFIQUE SARKER, back from Kurigram

A ferry service linking Roumari and Rajibpur upazilas with Kurigram district headquarter will be introduced soon, fulfilling a long cherished desire of the poor people of the two upazilas.

The Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) will introduce the service as part of its Tk 10 crore programme to improve Kurigram's communication with Roumari and Rajibpur.

Now hazardous journey on country boats from the two upazilas to Kurigram district town through the mighty Brahmaputra takes about six hours. This will be reduced to two hours once the ferry service is introduced, LGED sources told this correspondent.

Kurigram Deputy Commissioner Azizur Rahman Mollah made the announcement yesterday.

"LGED in Rangpur is going to commission the ferry service", the DC said.

Kurigram LGED Executive Engineer Salauddin said all necessary installations have been built for the ferry service from Chilmari ghat to Doikhowa.

Enamul Hoque, a social worker

in Roumari termed the announcement "unbelievable". "We have been hearing such words for the last 35 years. No one kept his commitment."

Roumari and Rajibpur are the two northern bordering upazilas with about two lakh people.

The two upazilas are separated from Kurigram by the Brahmaputra.

Roumari is 56 km (by road and river) and Rajibpur is 68 km away from the district headquarters. Earlier, Rajibpur was a part of Roumari upazila.

In 1986, the then government formed Rajibpur upazila with three unions.

Unlike in other upazilas in the district, the two upazilas lack basic facilities like road, power, healthcare, education and telecommunication.

There is no other occupation for the people there other than agriculture.

According to data available from the District Statistical Bureau, about 90 percent people there are below the poverty level, which is highest in the country.

Every year, hundreds of landless people leave homes for work elsewhere.



Eighty-one out of 218 students of Bogra Government Girls High School secured GPA-5 in this year's SSC Examinations. The results were published yesterday.

8x3

95 cops punished in Khulna for crimes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ninety-five policemen of different ranks were given punishment in last 17 months in the district including Khulna city for their involvement in criminal activities.

According to sources in Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) and Khulna Range DIG office, seven policemen were dismissed while 87 were given departmental punishment.

The sources said punitive actions were taken against 67 policemen last year under the Police Regulations of Bengal (PRB) Act, while 15 others were punished under the Police Ordinance. Of

them, five were dismissed and nine suspended.

Twenty-eight policemen were punished from January to June 30 this year. They include Additional Police Superintendent of Khulna Mofazzel Hossain.

Recently, cases were filed with Khulna thana and Dakop upazila court against 17 policemen in connection with murders of fish trader Abdur Rob Munshi and a boy, Munna.

SI Naru Gopal of Sonadanga thana of Khulna city and Constable Uttam Kumar of the same police station were dismissed from service for rape in Gobarchaka area.

8x3

No launch service for remote Patuakhali people for 2 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

About one-and-a-half-lakh people of shoal areas in six unions of Galachipa upazila are suffering a lot due to stoppage of launch service on Patuakhali-Char Montaz route for about two months.

The unions are Char Kajal, Char Biswas, Char Montaz, Chotto Baishdia, Baro Baishdia and Rangabali.

The launch service was stopped following a launch mishap in the Buragourango on May 15.

Launches were the only mode of transport for people of the unions. At present, people maintain link with the upazila headquarters and elsewhere with small boats.

Although local people have

demanding of the authorities to introduce sea boat service on the route, but their demand is yet to be implemented.

Ill-fated 'Prince of Patuakhali' having no route permit with a capacity of only 80 passengers met the accident when it was going towards Char Montaz from Patuakhali with over 300 passengers, about 100 maunds of potatoes and groundnuts on board. Officially the death toll rose to 65 while unofficially it was 82.

Although plying of launch in inclement weather is officially prohibited from March 15 to October 15, but it was defied frequently on the route.