

Road plaques commemorating Manik Saha demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Unidentified miscreants on Tuesday night demolished two plaques constructed by Khulna City Corporation (KCC) to identify a road in the city renamed as Journalist Manik Saha Road.

The KCC renamed the Choto Mirzapur Road after slain Manik Shah to show respect to his memory.

This incident has created panic among journalists as the plaques were destroyed while armed policemen were on routine patrol duty there at night.

One of the plaques made of cement and concrete was few yards from Khulna Press Club and offices of Dainik Samakal, Dainik Jugantar and Dainik Gramer Kagaj nearby.

This plaque was constructed at the spot where Manik Saha was killed in a bomb attack on January 15 last year.

The other plaque was placed



on the other end of the road. Both the plaques have been leveled to the ground.

Manik Saha was Khulna Correspondent of Dhaka-based daily The New Age and a stringer of BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation).

Khulna Press Club President Shaikh Abu Hasan and General Secretary Faruque Ahmed,

Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) President Makbul Hossain Mintu and General Secretary Mohammad Shaheb Ali in a joint statement yesterday strongly condemned the incident.

They have demanded an inquiry to find the culprits involved in demolishing breaking the plaques.

The heinous act might have been done by those who killed Manik Saha, they said in the statement.

City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman has also strongly condemned the incident and demanded arrest of the culprits. He said the plaques will be reconstructed.

When asked, a senior official of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) said they have launched a manhunt to nab the culprits. He did not rule out the possibility of involvement of extremists in the demolition.

Banapole port users go on strike today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jessore*

Benapole land port user associations are scheduled to go on an indefinite strike today to realise their 12-point demand.

The demands include cancellation of valuation committee and classification committee, charging customs duty on CRF consignments at CRF rate and waiver of 10-12 per cent duty on non-PSI goods.

The strike will create a complete deadlock at the land port as four organisations at Petrapole on the other side of the border are already on strike for a week for release of four reconditioned Indian trucks seized by Benapole customs and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) recently.

The Benapole port users who will be on strike are Benapole Customs Clearing & Forwarding (C&F) Agents' Association, C&F Agents' Workers Union, Transport Owners' Association, Transport Workers' Union and Handling Workers' Union.

They announced the strike programme at a press conference at Benapole on July 24.

TWO WEEKS AFTER JCD LEADER MURDER

None arrested, no move yet to reopen SUST

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Law enforcers could not arrest any of the killers of SUST JCD leader Rafiqul Islam Patwary Liton two weeks after the incident while the university also remained closed.

Liton was fatally beaten when he came out of the examination hall after appearing at the Masters final examination on July 13. He died at Osmany Medical College Hospital at night. Liton was assistant general secretary of JCD unit at Shahjalal University of Science & Technology (SUST).

It is the first killing amid political violence on the SUST campus. The inquiry committee formed

by the SUST Syndicate has so far recorded statements of about 40 people, most of whom were eye-witnesses to the incident, sources said.

The probe body was formed at an emergency Syndicate meeting within hours of the killing.

Maj. Gen. (Retd) Prof Nazmul Islam, Principal of a private medical college in the city, who is also a member of the SUST Syndicate, is convener of the seven-member body.

A source in the probe body told this correspondent yesterday that it would be able to submit its report

by the August 2 deadline.

Based on the statements of the witnesses, 15 JCD men have been 'identified' to be involved in the incident and letters have been sent to them by the probe body asking them to submit their statements by July 31, the source said.

Meanwhile, two SUST Deans submitted their statements to the probe committee on Monday.

Some JCD leaders at SUST claimed that the central JCD is trying to save the killers. It neither showed any interest as regards arrest of the killers nor came to Sylhet to probe the matter, they said.

After the incident, the SUST authorities banned political activi-

ties on the campus, which created commotion among student organisations.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) brought out processions and held rallies on the campus on Saturday and Monday respectively protested the decision, saying it was a ploy to save the killers who also belong to JCD.

They have demanded resignation of the Vice Chancellor for allegedly harbouring the killers and reopening of the university.

The Proctorial Committee then issued show cause notices on five SCF leaders for violating the ban.

Give us promised khas land

Several thousand landless demand at Kaliganj rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Several thousand landless people at a big rally in Kaliganj yesterday urged the government to fulfil the promise made by the then opposition leader Khaleda Zia to distribute government lands in the upazila among the landless.

The rally was held at Shahid Zaheda Nagar (former Baburabad) in Kaliganj to celebrate Shahid Zaheda Day.

The landless people there observe the day in memory of

Zaheda Khatun, a landless woman killed in clashes with land grabbers on July 27, 1998. The local people renamed Baburabad village after Zaheda following the incident.

Speakers at the rally reiterated their eight-point demand vowed to continue agitation for distribution of government lands among the landless in the area. said in what at the graveyard at upazila with a call to intensify the ongoing movement to establish landless people's rights to government khas

land.

"I lost my wife but I am happy that the landless people are united to realise khas lands", Zaheda's husband Abdul Hamid told the rally.

Ignoring rains, thousands landless men and women from eight villages in Kaliganj and Debhata upazilas gathered near the grave of Shahid Zaheda to establish their right to khas land and pay tributes to the memory of zaheda.

On July 27, 1998, some 10000

landless people with sticks and iron rods in hands had gathered at Baburabad (now Shahid Zahedanagar) to resist when land grabbers tried to evict landlessa people from government lands. There are about 1000 acres of khas land in the area.

This year the program was organised by Debhata-Kaliganj Bhumihin Sangram Committee. The rally was presided over by Wahab Ali Sardar.

Advocate Abdur Rahim was the chief guest while Kaliganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sheikh Maniruzzaman, Prof Abu Ahmed, Abdul Gani, Firoz Ahmed and Badrul Alam were special guests at the rally. It was addressed by, among others, Sardar Kazem Ali, Abdul Hamid, Kawsar Ali, Abdur Rashid, Mujibar Rahman, Mostafizur Rahman, Abul Kalam, Okalat Ali, Moksed Ali, Faizul Islam and Abdul Mannan.

The speakers vowed to continue agitation till their eight-point demand is met

They blamed the local administration for failure to implement the commitment made by the then opposition leader Khaleda Zia.

At a big gathering of landless people at Debishahar football ground on August 8, 1998, the then opposition leader had said that khas lands in eight villages in the area would be distributed among the landless, the speakers said.

The speakers also urged the landless people to remain vigilant against alleged conspiracies by vested quarters to grab government lands.

The rally was followed by a big procession in the area.

Section 144 in Chuadanga as 50 BNP men hurt in clashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

A tense situation is prevailing in Chuadanga town and police have been deployed following Tuesday's clashes between rival BNP factions over council of Jatytatabadi Krishik Dal that left at least 50 people injured.

The injured include editor of a local daily.

The administration clamped Section 144 on the town for an indefinite period to stave off further violence.

According to police and witnesses, clash ensued when Ohidul Islam, president of Chuadanga town BNP and some of his supporters were obstructed from entering the council venue—Simanta Town Hall—by opponents led by Nazmul Salehin Liton, Chuadanga Krishik Dal General Secretary.

Soon the rival groups were locked in a clash inside the hall, leaving about 20 people injured.

They used iron rods, brickbats and lethal weapons and also ransacked the hall.

Being informed, members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police quelled the violence by charging batons and hurling tear gas shells.

The rivals then regrouped in different areas and fought pitched battles, spreading the violence in the whole town. Over 30 people were injured in the clashes.

Editor of local daily Mathabhanga Sardar Al-Amin was injured when some ruling party activists attacked him. He was admitted to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital.

The district administration imposed Section 144 in the town for an indefinite period as its request to BNP and Krishak Dal leaders to postpone the council went unheeded, official sources said yesterday when contacted over phone.

4 Udichi blast case witnesses examined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jessore*

Three witnesses in the sensational Udichi bomb blast case were examined here yesterday, the second date of hearing of the case.

The Special Judge (District Judge) Abul Hossain Bepari heard and recorded statements of police constables Abdul Bari, Ebadat Hossain and Pankaj Paul, who was injured in the blast.

Sub Inspector Abdul Aziz, investigation officer of the case, also concluded his statement yesterday.

Ten people were killed and over 150 injured in bomb blasts at Munshi Meherullah Maidan at around 1am on March 7, 1999 when a cultural function was going on marking the 12th National Conference of Udichi Shilpi Gosgthi.

Twenty-four people including Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam were accused in the charge sheet. Later, Tariqul Islam's name was quashed from the case by a High Court order.



Awami League brought out a procession in Tangail town yesterday demanding trial of the murder of its leader Aminur Rahman Khan Bappy.

PHOTO: STAR



Partial view of the rally of landless people held in Kaliganj yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

7.5x3

10x4