

Threat to blow up TIB office in Lalmonirhat

Jubo Dal denies the claim

BDNEWS, Lalmonirhat

Jubo Dal activists allegedly threatened to blast off the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) district office in Lalmonirhat.

TIB officials made the allegations at a press conference in Lalmonirhat yesterday.

They claimed a group of Jubo Dal workers, led by convenor of the district committee AKM Mominul Haque, attacked a reception, jointly organised by the Lalmonirhat Sacheton Nagorik Committee and

the TIB at the district council auditorium for GPA-5 recipients in SSC and HSC examinations on Saturday.

They also threatened to blow up the TIB district office if it was not closed within 24 hours.

A general diary has been filed accusing 30 persons including Mominul Haque.

Meanwhile, the Jubo Dal district committee in a separate press conference at its office termed the incident false.

Police have been deployed at the TIB office following the incident.

JU students call off agitation

JU CORRESPONDENT

The activists of Progotisheel Chhara Jote (PSJ) yesterday called off their agitation programme as the Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities pledged to take necessary steps regarding their demand of reducing price hike of admission forms in the next meeting of Central Admission Committee.

The PSJ, however, did not withdraw their call for an indefinite student strike on campus from November 12, the day of resumption of classes after Eid-vacation. They vowed to continue with their strike if the authorities fail to meet their demand.

The announcement was made at a rally in front of Agrani Bank branch of JU. Leaders of various left leaning student organisations addressed the rally.



Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil presents Eid gifts to injured freedom fighters at the Muktiyoddha Rehabilitation Centre at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

LDCs to enhance resilience to climate change

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Along with negotiations with the developed nations, the least developed countries (LDCs) should start more analysis and monitoring of the adverse impact to enhance resilience to climate change.

The speakers expressed the view at the concluding session of the two-day regional workshop on 'Climate change negotiations in South and Southeast Asia: The role of Bangladesh and Least Developed Countries' in the city yesterday.

The workshop was held to get more regional cooperation and to have a good bargaining with the developed countries in next summit in Montreal, Canada.

LDCs, whose current chair is Bangladesh, have a specially important role to play in getting a successful outcome from the Montreal meeting, said Saleemul Huq, director of Climate Change Programme of International Institute for Environment and Development, UK.

Prof Gordon Conway, chief scientific advisor of DFID, said science on climate change is very clear at the global level.

"But more analysis and monitoring is essential at regional and local level for better understanding of sea level rise, tropical cyclone and monsoon issues," he said.

"We are yet to properly forecast those things," he added.

Benito Muller, director and head of Fellowship Programme of European Capacity Building Initiative (ECBI), said he would submit proposal to the donor agencies so that least developed countries get more fund to meet the crisis caused by climate change.

Mohammed Reazuddin, technical director of environment department, presented the views that LDCs should present at the Montreal summit on climate change.

Reaz Rahman, advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was present at the concluding session as chief guest while Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury, secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, was in the chair.

Dr A Atiq Rahman conducted the concluding session.

Forty participants from government and civil society of seven South Asian countries as well as three Southeast Asian countries attended the workshop.

It was jointly organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, International Institute for Environment and Development, European Capacity Building Initiative, and British High Commission and Department for International Development.

Cops in extortionists role

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vendors have been setting up their shops occupying the footpaths. Though these spots are typically occupied by vendors all the year round, their number rises sharply during the month of Ramadan preceding the Eid.

More than a hundred vendors set up their makeshift shops on different footpaths at Farm Gate particularly in front of Tejgaon College and Aananda Cinema Hall. A whole variety of children's clothes, Panjabis, Saris, Shalwars, Lungis, and shirts are on display on a large sheet of cloth spread right on the footpath. Badiuzzaman (not his real name), who sells children's clothes from a 3 ft by 3 ft space, said in his four-year career as a vendor he has never seen the police being so aggressive in extortion. "On October 29, I paid Tk 220 and the amount will go up higher as the Eid nears," he said. Comparatively larger vendors have to pay the police up to Tk 300 a day in illegal tolls.

The extortions usually begin in the evening and a number of police squads start collecting tolls. Some of the vendors identified Habildar Shahzahan and Sergeant Salam among many others as the toll collectors. Then there are different patrol teams, not to mention the "linemen". Duty Officer of Tejgaon police station Abdus Sabur however said he knew no one by those names. He however assured this correspondent that he would look into the matter.

About 1,000 vendors have been sitting with their merchandises on the footpaths at Gulistan, Baitul Muqarram, Paltan, and Fulbaria. A vendor has to pay tolls of Tk 50 to Tk 200 at these places depending on the number of merchandises one has on display. Besides the linemen, vendors

at these places have to pay tolls also to the representatives sent by patrol inspectors (PI) and to the patrol police. Latif (not his real name), who once had a shop at New Bangabazar, has now come onto the street after the market was gutted by a fire last year. He sells shirts from his 2.5 ft by 2.5 ft space on the footpath right in front of an under construction multi-storied market. "I am paying Tk 75 everyday to the lineman," he said.

Vendors on the footpath in front of Dhanmandi Hawkers' Market have also not escaped extortions by the police. Mofiz (not his real name), who sells Panjabis, said until recently the vendors used to pay a daily toll of Tk 120 to a lineman named Rafiq. About a month ago when Rafiq was apprehended by Rab the vendors in the area heaved a sigh of relief. "But for the last two weeks we have been paying Tk 200 to Tk 350 to the new toll collector," Latif pointed out.

A Rab source informed this correspondent that about 1000 Rab members from five battalions are working at different city markets. Continuous presence of Rab has succeeded to keep the extortionists at bay to a good extent. But the vendors almost all over the city said while they are enjoying a little respite from the civilian extortionists, extortions by the police is not letting them do their business smoothly.

Asked by The Daily Star to comment on extortions by the police, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahamn put the blame on the street vendors for doing business on the footpaths. "Why should they pay toll to the police. We don't have any complaints regarding such extortions. If anyone complains we are certainly going to take actions against the guilty officers.