

9-POINT DEMAND  
Union councils  
demonstrate  
across country

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Union councils held demonstrations and brought out processions at district headquarters across the country yesterday to press their nine-point demand, according to reports from our correspondents.

Their demands include enhancement of budgetary allocation for development activities under local bodies, authority to collect taxes and lease markets, water bodies and government lands and an end to 'interference' in their activities by local lawmakers.

They are also demanding fixation of salaries at Tk 5,000 and Tk 3,000 for union council chairmen and members respectively and authority to recruit village police.

Our RU Correspondent reported that chairmen and members of 71 union councils in Rajshahi district held a rally, brought out a procession and submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner to press their demands.

The procession, led by Rajshahi Divisional Convenor of Bangladesh Union Council Forum, Bazley Rezbi Al Hasan Munzil, followed a rally held on Rajshahi court premises with Putia Union Council Chairman Waizul Islam in the chair.

Speakers at the rally alleged that the government is squeezing income sources of union councils while local lawmakers are interfering in their activities. These hamper their activities.

They urged the government to fulfil their demands and threatened of tougher agitation for non-compliance.

In Gaibandha, chairmen and members of 82 union councils in held a rally in front of the Shaheed Miner with Amanul Huq Mona in the chair, our correspondent reported.

Similar programmes were also organised in 15 other northern districts.

Speakers at the rally urged the government to turn local bodies at grassroots levels as centres for all development activities.

In Rangpur, the Union Council leaders paraded streets on the town after a rally and handed over a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner.

At the rally, they urged the government to empower local bodies as per Articles 59, and 60 of the Constitution and hold upazila council election following a High Court directive issued in 1992.

## Indigenous people decide not to observe Boishabi this year

Leaders allege lack of security in hill districts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Forum (DYF), an organisation of indigenous youths, held at Marma Unnayan Sangshad.

DYF President Dipankar Chakma, its secretary Mithun Chakma, Hill Women Federation President Sonali Chakma and its secretary Rina Dewan addressed the press conference.

They said the festival will not be observed as life and property of indigenous people are not safe any

more.

At least 60 indigenous people were injured in the clashes on March 29 and April 3 and two women were raped, they alleged.

On Tuesday, leaders of Sachetan Jum Samaj, an indigenous organisation, at a press conference at Khagrachhari alleged that most of the clashes took place as a section of Bangalee settlers enjoying backing from ruling parties tried to grab lands

of hill people. They demanded immediate settlement of land disputes.

Sources in the areas said panic prevails among indigenous communities though army and police are on patrol there.

Khagrachhari Deputy Commissioner and Police Superintendent visited the areas on Tuesday and talked to leaders of Bangalee and indigenous communities in an effort to foster communal harmony.

Boishabi festival, marking beginning of the Bangla new year, falls on April 12-14.

The indigenous people also took out a procession in Khagrachhari town yesterday protesting recent attacks on them in different areas.

They blamed a section of ruling BNP leaders for the attacks.

The procession brought out from Marma Unnayan Sangshad premises at Pankhaiyapara parade streets of the town. The processionists chanted slogans demanding security of indigenous people, withdrawal of Bangalees and Army from hills and punishment to those responsible for the March 29 and April 3 clashes in Gamari, Komolchhari, Maichchhari and Mohalchhari in the district.

After the procession, Marma leaders submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Commissioner demanding immediate steps for security in the hills.

The decision not to observe the Boishabi was announced at a press conference by Democratic Youth

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Police said some local people

informed them when the adulterated fertiliser was being stored there.

The Magistrate instantly ordered seizure of the fertiliser and informed district agriculture office. Later, Plant Protection Inspector Sahidul Islam of district agriculture office confirmed that the fertiliser was adulterated. The consignment was brought from Chittagong.

A case has been filed against Sajahan Ali.

Different organisations including political parties and labourers' organisations in the district had been blaming some ruling party

leaders for supply of adulterated fertiliser.

After recovery of the fertiliser, local unit of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Bangladesh Khet Mujur Samity of Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) and Bangladesher Communist Party have demanded arrest of all such culprits and their punishment.

Police said a gang of robbers boarded the bus in the guise of passengers. As soon as it crossed Bogra town, they took control of bus robbers by wielding arms and then looted passengers.

The passengers who tried to resist miscreants were stabbed indiscriminately and beaten up. At least 35 were injured, 15 of them stabbed.

PHOTO: STAR

Indigenous people led by Marma Unnayan Sangshad and Marma Students Council brought out a procession in Khagrachhari town yesterday protesting attack on them allegedly by Bangalees in some areas of the district on March 29 and April 3.

PHOTO: STAR

## Adulterated fertiliser seized from BNP leader's godown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Kushtia police recovered 1066 bags (69,143 kilograms) of adulterated TSP (triple super phosphate) fertiliser from the godown of a local ruling BNP leader in the town on Tuesday.

Police arrested manager of the godown, Saiful Islam, but the BNP leader, Sajahan Ali, escaped.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Kushtia Sadar police led by Magistrate Santimoni Chakma raided the godown at Barobazar at about 11:am.

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PHOTO: STAR

## 'FALSE' CASES Atwari traders besiege UNO office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Hundreds of traders in Atwari upazila of Panchagarh yesterday laid a siege to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer's (UNO) office protesting 'false cases' filed against 100 people following a clash between BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) members and villagers at Fakirganj village on Monday.

At least 13 people including BDR and police personnel were injured in the clash that also witnessed BDR firing.

BDR officials filed two cases with Atwari Police Station accusing the villagers including Atwari Traders Union president Anisul Islam.

Later, the businessmen handed over a memorandum to the UNO demanding withdrawal of cases.

A meeting was also held where the speakers threatened to stop trade in the entire upazila if the cases are not withdrawn.

They alleged that police conducted several raids after the clash with villagers. Many already fled homes to evade arrest and police harassment, they said.

The programmes taken up at separate meetings held last night include processions and rallies and wearing black badges by freedom fighters.

Enamul Haque Biswas and Abul Khair Sardar, convenors of Satkhira units of Mukti Joddha Sangsads and Nirmul Committee respectively told this correspondent yesterday

## 3-day hartal called to 'resist' Nizami's Satkhira visit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Tension is mounting centring the planned visit to Satkhira by Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Industries Minister Maulana Matir Rahman Nizami.

Nizami is scheduled to address public meetings at Assasuni, Shyamnagar and Satkhira Sadar upazilas on April 14, 15 and 16 respectively.

The local units of Mukti Joddha Sangsads and Ekattorer Ghatak Dalai Nirmul Committee, backed by some opposition political parties, have announced programmes including a 72-hour hartal from to resist the visit while the Jamaat prepares to make the visit a success.

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On contact, Altaf Hossain, publicity secretary of district Jamaat said, Nizami's programmes at Satkhira Sadar, Assasuni and Shyamnagar upazilas will be held on schedule and none will be able to resist those.

BNP leader Abdur Rouf, now at loggerheads with Jamaat lawmaker Maulana Abdul Khaleque is general secretary of the association. Both are aspirants for nomination from the ruling coalition in the next parliamentary election.

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