

2 UP leaders
abducted in
Mohalchhari
Clash between UPDF,
PCJSS feared

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Tension mounted in Mohalchhari following abduction of Sadar Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Arkimides Chakma along with a UP member and another indigenous man on Sunday.

Rival indigenous organisations UPDF (United Peoples Democratic Forum) and PCJSS (Parbatty Chittagong Jana Sanghati Samity) blamed each other for the abduction. Arkimides Chakma is reportedly a supporter of UPDF.

Till yesterday evening, police could neither rescue them nor find any clue about the identity of the abductors.

The incident may trigger clashes between the two groups, sources in Mohalchhari said.

Police said Arkimides Chakma, UP member Bipul Chakma and Tipu Chakma were abducted at Lemuchhari by some armed youths when they were returning home after attending a meeting of upazila law and order committee at the upazila headquarters.

Khagrachhari district UPDF leader Samari Chakma blamed PCJSS for the abduction and urged the authorities to rescue them.

Khagrachhari district PCJSS general secretary Sudakar Tripura refuted the allegation, saying it is pre-planned drama by UPDF to blame PCJSS.

Lobby for nomination of 'clean' candidates

Kamal urges civil society in Chittagong

CU CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr. Kamal Hossain has said the Election Commission should work independently, free from any political influence, for holding free, fair and credible elections.

He also demanded reforms to the Election Commission (EC) and then caretaker system.

The EC it has proved ineffective in preparing a correct voter list, the first prerequisite for holding the next parliamentary election. There has been numerous complaints about fake voters having been recorded, he said.

He was speaking at a view exchange meeting on 'National Elections 2007: Evolving a Framework for Free and Fair Election', held on Monday at Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) auditorium.

CCC Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury also spoke at the meeting, organised by Centre for Democracy (CD), a local NGO.

CD President Abul Ahsan moderated the meeting while national daily Independent and local daily Purbokone were media partners.

The eminent jurist also stressed the need for transparency in election expenses of candidates to stop use of black money in polls. Candidates must declare their assets and defaulters must be barred from the polls race, he said.

Dr Kamal said the media and the civil society have great roles to play in creating awareness among people about the need for holding a free and fair election and nomination of 'clean' candidates in the next parliamentary polls.

Democracy will falter unless use of money and muscle power is stopped and fair and credible elections are not held, he said.

Honest, efficient and dedicated people should come to politics for consolidation of democracy and development of the country.

Political parties have to take the lead in this regard by nominating 'clean' candidates in the next polls.

Dr. Kamal urged the civil society to form a greater unity and launch a campaign so that parties nominate 'clean' candidates, he said.

The speakers included editor of the Independent Mahbubul Alam and Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufian.

Man takes life
failing to repay
NGO loans

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A poor rickshaw van puller has allegedly committed suicide night as he failed to pay loan installments of two NGOs.

The victim has been identified as Abdus Sattar, 40 of Chelat village in sadar upazila.

Quoting local people police said, Sattar took Tk 5000 loan each from a national and a local NGO for treatment of his ailing wife Rehena Khatun four months back.

He could not pay the loan installments.

The couple quarreled on the issue Saturday night. At dead of night, Sattar took poison. He died while being taken to hospital yesterday morning, police said.

On contact, Sadar thana OC Shahjahan confirmed the incident.



PHOTO: STAR

The Barisal Citizens Council formed a human chain in front of Aswani Kumar Hall in the city yesterday to press construction of a bridge on Kirtonkhola at Dapdapia, a demand ignored for long.

Khulna BNP bigwig to join Bikalpadhara ?

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

An influential BNP lawmaker in Khulna is likely to join Bikalpadhara soon along with a large number of party leaders and activists including former general secretary of now-dissolved city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju.

According to party sources, the lawmaker along with Nazrul Islam Manju met with Bikalpadhara central general secretary Maj. (Retd) M A Mannan at his residence in Dhaka recently to fix up a joining date.

The lawmaker now heading his faction of Khulna BNP also talked to this correspondent but declined to be named.

The other faction is led by city Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman and lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi. Lobi is convenor of Khulna city BNP.

Both the factions staged show-downs in last last one year, holding separate processions and rallies as party programmes.

Insiders in Khulna BNP said the lawmaker and Manju are in close touch with Bikalpadhara high command for about a month. They will join Bikalpadhara if BNP high command does not consider their contributions in giving nomination for the next parliamentary election.

Bikalpadhara high command assured them in this regard, the insiders said.

When asked, former general secretary of city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju told this correspondent that he is yet to decide what to do: "BNP will lose all seats in Khulna district if two factions do not sink differences before the election", he said.

"There was no reason to dissolve the city (BNP) committee and form a convening committee with a non-political man as its convenor", Manju said.

"We are just brooding over quitting BNP, being the worst victims of dirty internal feud in Khulna", said the lawmaker. He however sought a little more time to tell finally if Bikalpadhara would be his next political platform.

Meanwhile, intelligence agencies are reportedly watching movement of some top leaders of Khulna BNP including former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali following information that they will join Bikalpadhara if they are not assured of nomination by the party high command.



PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN
Ravaging the environment...Illegal extraction of stone from fields goes on unabated in many areas of Lalmonirhat. The photo was taken from near the Teesta bridge.

8X3

6X2

6X3