

Teachers’ sit-in holds back SUST appointment bid

Interview postponed: Processions, rallies demand VC’s resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) authorities yesterday postponed the scheduled interview for appointment and promotion of teachers in two departments in the face protest by a section of teachers aligned with opposition parties.

The teachers began a sit-in in

front of the VC’s office at 6-30 in the morning protesting what they called the ‘illegal recruitment’.

They are demanding resignation of Vice-chancellor Prof Musleh Uddin Ahmed, appointment of a new VC and resumption of classes.

At about 10-30 am, SUST Proctor Dr Sajedul Karim requested the agitating teachers to withdraw the sit-in, assuring them that he

would request the authorities to postpone the interview. The teachers complied with the request.

Alongside, the Sammilita Chhatra Sangram Parishad, a combine of student bodies belonging to the opposition and the local 14-party opposition alliance also brought out separate processions and held rallies in the city demanding withdrawal of the VC and

resumption of classes. Teachers aligned with the ruling party also brought out a procession on the campus for resumption of classes.

At a brief rally during the teachers’ sit-in, speakers said the bid for fresh recruitment in Political Science and Public Administration departments is illegal and unjust because those appointed in 2005-2006 financial year are yet to be included in the government’s revenue budget.

They alleged that, the VC, who had resigned amid students’ agitation following the killing of a student and had left the campus two months ago, managed his return under cover of JCD cadres and police. This has tarnishing the image of the university and its teachers, they said.

The Sammilita Chhatra Sangram Parishad took out a procession from the city’s Madina Market area towards the university.

As the procession reached near BDR gate about 11-45, police stopped it. The students sat there blocking the Sylhet-Sunamganj road. They held a rally there and withdrew the barricade after about an hour.

SUST Registrar Jamil Ahmed Chowdhury later said the interview has been postponed.

The 14-party combine held a rally at the city’s Court Point to press withdrawal of the VC and a judicial probe into the incidents that led to the killing of a student in police firing on the night of May 12.

A farmer irrigating his Amon rice filed in Nilphamari due to scanty rainfall in northern districts during the current monsoon. District agriculture officials said the total rainfall recorded since June in Nilphamari was only 327 mm against 15,97 mm last year. At least 500 mm rainfall is needed during June-July for Amon cultivation, they said.



PHOTO: STAR

IUTA leaders meet UGC chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Leaders of Islamic University Teachers association (IUTA) met with University Grants Commission’s (UGC) Chairman Prof. M Asaduzzaman in Dhaka yesterday over the situation in IU, sources at the university said here.

They said the IUTA leaders headed by its president Prof Faez Mohammad Serajul Hoque apprised the UGC chairman about the stalemate in the university and requested him to take steps to solve the crisis.

The IUTA leaders will meet with State Minister for Education Ehsanul Hoq Milon today and discuss the IU situation.

The sources quoted high officials in the education ministry and the UGC to say that the government has decided to take immediate steps to resolve the IU crisis and appoint a new vice-chancellor.

The Prime Minister, who is also chancellor of the university, will take a decision immediately, they claimed.

The IUTA is agitating for appointment of a new VC in the university since Wednesday last. Classes and examinations are not held now.

The teachers are also non-cooperating with newly appointed acting vice-chancellor Prof Anwarul Karim.

Prof Karim, who was treasurer, was appointed acting VC on June 18.

3 rice trucks hijacked in three days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Panic gripped rice traders, mill owners and truckers as three rice-loaded trucks from Dhanbari in Madhupur upazila were hijacked in different areas of the country in the last three days and a truck helper was murdered.

Abdus Samad, owner of Razzak Auto Rice Mill in Dhanbari thana in Madhupur upazila, said a gang of armed miscreants beat the driver and helpers and hijacked the truck in Baubugang Friday midnight when it was going to Barishal.

Another truck owned by Apu Miah, a rice trader in Dhanbai, was hijacked by from near Nandan Park in Kaliakair upazila in Gazipur district Thursday midnight. The miscreants stabbed helper Abdul Malek as he tried to resist them.

Trader Abdul Bari of Dhanbari said armed miscreants snatched his rice-laden truck from Daudkandi in Comilla Wednesday midnight when it was going to Chittagong from Dhanbari.

BSCIC ESTATE IN SIRAJGANJ

Toxic mill waste polluting water bodies, croplands

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, Sirajganj

Toxic water released by some mills in BSCIC (Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation) in Sirajganj are polluting environment in the industrial estate and water bodies and croplands around it.

The pollutants include two yarn dyeing and processing units and a small cement factory, sources in the BSCIC office and owners of some industrial units said.

They said owners of some industrial units, joined by local residents and farmers in adjoining villages staged demonstrations on several occasions and complained to the BSCIC authorities but to no effect.

The atmosphere in the industrial estate is dirty and unhygienic since long due to lack of proper drainage system. A slight rain creates water-logging in the estate and most of the roads are flooded. BSCIC officials said they could not take up any plan because of lack of funds.

The situation deteriorated when the three yarn dyeing and processing mills and some other industrial units started releasing polluted water as they did not have treatment facilities or reservoirs for safe

disposal of pollutants, the sources said.

Polluted waters from the units at times overflow the Sirajganj-Bogra highway, the only road to enter the town. Roads and Highways officials here alleged that stagnant water also damages the road. This correspondent during a recent visit to the area also saw water overflowing the highway.

The Sirajganj BSCIC estate was set up on 10 acres of land in 1985.

A total of 10 industrial units are now in operation and more five are coming up.

The 10 include three cotton dyeing and processing mill, a cement mill and a salt mill. None of the units has treatment plant or proper drainage facility for disposal of effluents.

The sources said the three dyeing mills were set up between 1987 and 1990. They started operation with one-year permission from the Department of Environment (DoE) with a promise to set up treatment plants by this time. They renewed the permission every year till 2004 but did not take any step to install treatment plants, the sources said.

Toxic water released from the

mills flows into nearby croplands, water bodies and to the Kalinjar river.

The cement factory has no dust collector. Workers in other industrial units and villagers alleged that dust from the cement mill is polluting the air.

When contacted, Abdul Latif, Assistant General Manager (AGM) the BSCIC estate said he issued notices to the yarn dyeing units and the cement factory to install treatment plants and dust collector.

The BSCIC authorities can not take action against them due to intervention by a local ruling party lawmaker, he said.

Tarikul Islam, Assistance Engineer of BSCIC said the industries ministry secretary visited the BSCIC estate on May 2 this year. After the visit, he submitted a plan involving Tk 63 lakh to set up a RCC pipe drain upto Kalinjar rafter to remove the water-logging.

Anisur Rahman, President of Sirajganj District Chambers and Commerce said toxic water from the industrial estate is polluting the environment and spreading diseases but they have nothing to do. He said they urged the district administration on several occasions to take steps, but no initiative came.



PHOTO: STAR

Stagnant toxic water in the compound of Sirajganj BSCIC estate. Some mills operating without treatment plants are polluting the environment there.

Token hunger strike at Tengratila

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet.

As part of the 3-day agitation, about 500 affected villagers including women staged an 8-hour ‘token hunger strike’ at the main gate of Tengratila gas field yesterday to press their 6-point demand including payment of compensation.

Their 3-day programme will end today with handover of a memorandum to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer.

The agitation is being spearheaded by the newly formed Tengratila Dabi Aday Sangram Parishad.

Addressing a brief rally during the token hunger strike, its leaders said they will put the main gate of Tengratila gas field office under lock and key on 1 August and announce tougher programmes if the authorities do not accept their demands by July 31.

After the hunger strike, the villagers brought out a procession in the area.

The ecology, crop lands and greens in Tengratila were damaged due to blowout and devastating fire twice during drilling by Canadian company Niko.

BID TO FORM DINAJPUR BODY 12 hurt as Jubo League factions clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Factional clashes marked with chase and counter-chase over formation of committee left at least 12 Jubo League activists injured, three of them critically, in the town Saturday evening.

The three – Md Masud Alam, Sushanta Kumar Misra and Mohiuddin Ahmed 30 were first taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital and then sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, according to police and family sources.

The rest are undergoing treatment to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital, according to party and hospital sources. The two rival factions used lethal weapons during the clashes that started in front of AL office and then spread to Maldhapatty, Goneshtola and Charububu areas, creating panic and making shopkeepers down their shutters.

Police have been deployed around Awami League office and in Maldhapatty, Goneshtola and

Charububu areas to stave off fresh violence.

Dinajpur Jubo League is divided into two groups, one led by lawmaker Md. Mostafizur Rahman and the other by Md. Ziaul Imam Chowdhury, acting president of district Awami League.

The clashes ensued when Jubo League leader advocate Saiful Islam belonging to Mustafizur faction called a party meeting on Sharodeshwari Girls High School premises Saturday afternoon to form a district committee. District Jubo League president advocate Delwar Hossain was not invited.

As the news reached Delwar, he along with his men swooped on the venue and foiled the meeting. One of his men was injured in a brawl.

A short while later, Saiful Islam and his men attacked their rivals in front of AL office. And it was free for all to chase each other with sharp weapons and iron rods. Witnesses said their chase and counter-chase panicked locals and sent pedestrians running for shelter.

Back to blessings of Mother Nature

Farmers in a Jessore village using beneficial insects and pheromone trap instead of harmful insecticides

HOSAIN SERAJ, back from Bagherpara, Jessore

Farmers in a remote village in Jessore are producing plenty of vegetables without using harmful insecticides and toxic materials.

With the help of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), 125 farmers in Gaidghat village in Bagherpara upazila village now use ‘pheromone trap’ and ‘beneficial insects’ instead of heavy doses of pesticide.

They are growing vegetables on 32 acres with the new methods, possibly the first organised effort in the country to produce ‘safe and natural’ vegetables.

A Dhaka-based NGO, Jubok Agro-Biotech Limited (JAL), helped them in the venture.

The farmers are being doubly benefited by the newly innovated technology. The cost of production is less but the items are sold at prices higher than those produced by using pesticides. The prices are at least 15 per cent higher than other vegetables.

On every Tuesday and Friday, the farmers bring the vegetables to the Agriculture Technology Implementation Center (ATIC) at Gaidghat village. After weighing and packaging, truckloads of the vegetables leave for markets in Dhaka.

“We are really overwhelmed. We are earning more while supplying safe vegetables and saving people from health hazards”, farmer Ayub Hossain told this correspondent at Gaidghat village.

BARI in 2001 took up a programme styled Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to discourage farmers to use harmful pesticides. At first, its scientists introduced ‘pheromone trap’, made with a



PHOTO: STAR

One of the farmers in Gaidghat village in Bagherpara upazila in Jessore district beside his field where pheromone trap and beneficial insects are used instead of harmful insecticide to produce vegetables.

plastic bottle. The bottle is half filled with water and then pheromonean artificial sex-hormone of female insects is put inside it. Pheromone’s smell attracts insects and kills those. Farmers could control fruit-borer insects by using the pheromone trap. But to check the leaf and shoot-borers, they had to use pesticide to a limited scale.

This year, JAL came forward with some ‘beneficial insects’ produced in their laboratory to check the

harmful ‘leaf and shoot-borers’.

A total of 125 farmers used the ‘beneficial insects’ on their 32 acres of land and produced vegetables without using insecticides and toxic substances. Initially, JAL bought the vegetables from farmers and supplied those to kitchen markets in Dhaka. Now, farmers directly sell the vegetables to traders.

Talking to The Daily Star, Senior Scientific Officer Dr Sayed Nurul Alam of BARI said, “Marketing was

one of the main barriers that has been removed by JAL. Farmers are now getting higher prices for their products following the laudable initiative by JAL”.

JAL Director Serajul Islam expressed his optimism that they would be able to spread the new technology to other areas of the country within a short time so that farmers can shun use of harmful pesticides.

CRACK, EROSION

Kaptai-Ctg road link may snap any time

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rngamati

Road communication between Kaptai and Chittagong may snap any time as a portion of the road has eroded in hilly Bengghhari area due to downpour.

Vehicles including trucks are plying the road at risk, which is further damaging the road.

This correspondent during a recent visit saw cracks near the collapsed portion of the road.

The road communication will stop any moment if any more portion of the metalled road collapses, locals said.

Every day, hundreds of vehicles including loaded trucks ply

the road. The road is the lifeline for Kaptai, an important tourist spot in the country.

Some locals said a big crack was seen on the road at Bengghhari early this month when monsoon began in full swing. The portion of the road would not have collapsed had the authorities taken steps immediately to repair and protect the road there, they claimed.

Roads and Highways Department officials in Rangamati said it is difficult and costly to repair a road in a hilly terrain. They however said work will be started soon to repair it before it is damaged more.

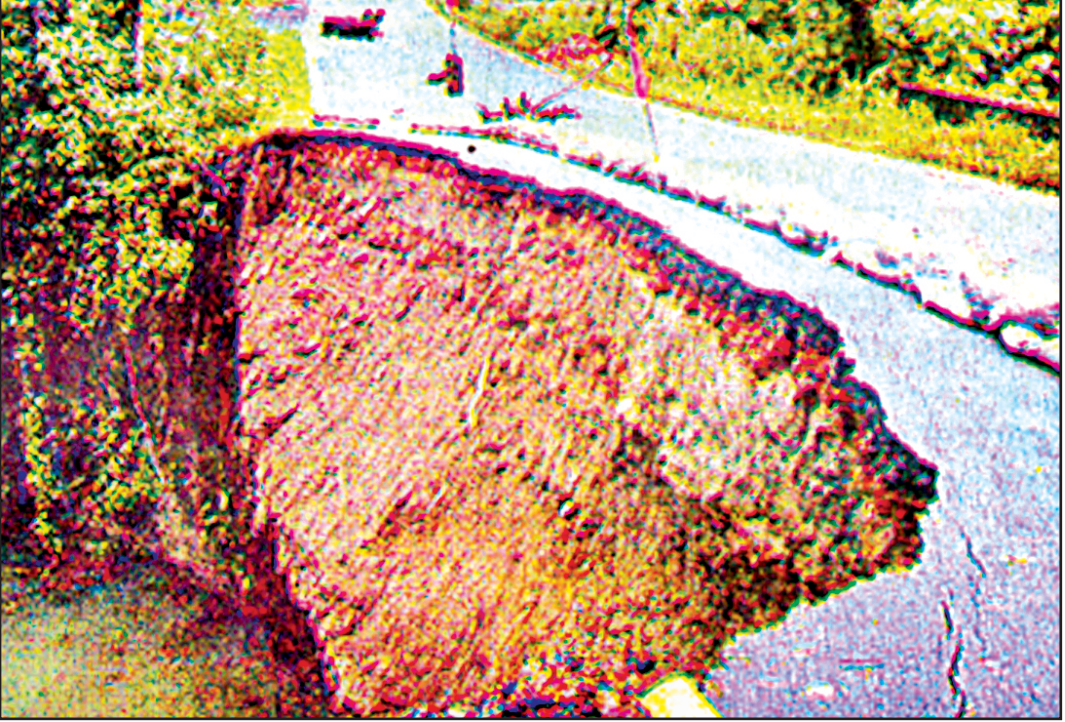


PHOTO: STAR

The eroded portion of Kaptai-Chittagong road at Bengghhari. The road has become vulnerable as cracks developed in it due to downpour.