

Fresh threat to evict Tangail brothel inmates 'at any cost'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

The 'brothel eviction committee' held a rally on Shaheed Minar premises in Tangail town yesterday vowing to go ahead with their programme and resist the opponents.

Fourteen people were injured on Saturday when the committee in a big procession moved to evict inmates of the 150 year-old Kandupara brothel in the town and attacked a rally of citizens' body which opposed the eviction without rehabilitation of sex workers.

Yesterday's eviction committee rally, held under police guard, was presided over by its convener and Tangail municipal chairman Jamilur

Rahman Miron.

It was addressed by, among others, Hafez Shamsuzzaman, Abdul Jalil, Rafiqul Islam, Nurul Islam, Abdul Hadi, ward commissioner Nurul Alam, Abu Taleb Ansary, Khalilur Rahman, Jatiya Chhatra Samaj general secretary Shah Alam, Hashrat Khan Bhasani, Sajib Islam, and Zahidur Rahman.

They said they will evict inmates of the brothel at any cost as it is a den of drug addicts, criminal and miscreants.

They claimed that leaders of Nagorik Mancha (citizens' body) who opposed the eviction are 'brokers' of sex workers and that they also would be resisted.

The municipal chairman told the

rally that a section of local police men led by the Sadar thana Officer-in-Charge are protecting sex workers and house owners in the brothel for their (police) own interest.

He demanded removal of the police officer who led Saturday's police action.

He said the move to evict inmates of the brothel will continue. The eviction committee will hold another rally at the Shaheed Minar on Wednesday and hand over a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner (DC).

"We will hold procession and rallies every Friday until they are evicted," he said.

Police were deployed at different points in the town as tension

mounted. A meeting on law and order will be held at 10am today at Deputy Commissioner's office, sources said.

On Saturday, supporters of the eviction committee attacked a rally of Nagorik Mancha at the Shaheed Minar.

The Nagorik Mancha is demanding rehabilitation of the 1200 sex workers before eviction of the 150 year-old Kandupara brothel in the town.

Sources claimed that an influential member of the eviction committee wants to construct a market and an autorickshaw stand at the place of the brothel.



CROPLANDS TURN INTO GRAZING FIELDS: Vast areas remained uncultivated in Sunamganj district during Amon season this year due to scanty rains. The photo was taken from Radhanagar in Derai upazila.

TANGAIL-5 CONSTITUENCY

BNP men rival for ticket, but united against JP



MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

BNP leaders and activists are adamant not to accept any Jatiya Party (Ershad) man as alliance candidate in Tangail-5 (Sadar-Delduar) constituency in the coming election.

Some leaders of Tangail district BNP affirmed their stand while talking to this correspondent.

Tangail-5 is among the 50 Jatiya Sangsad seats Ershad reportedly demanded as a condition for his joining the four-party alliance.

BNP's Maj. Gen. (Retd) Mahmudul Hassan was elected from the constituency in 2001 election with 96,544 votes while Awami League (AL) candidate Abdul Mannan ran second with 83,458 votes. Abdul Mannan died after the election.

Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) candidate Murad Siddiqui was in third position with 68,168 votes while JP candidate industrialist Abul Kashem ran fourth with

50,256 votes.

Mahmudul Hassan, president of Tangail district BNP, has also a rival in the party's secretary Moniruzzaman Bulbul. Both are campaigning, telling their followers that they would get nomination, party sources said.

Jatiya Party's Abul Kashem is also in the field, holding rallies and meeting people. He assured his party men that he would get alliance ticket if JP joins the alliance, party sources said.

Mahmudul Hassan was a minister in Ershad's cabinet during JP rule. He was elected from the constituency as JP candidate in 1991 election. Later, he joined BNP in 1994.

Mahmudul Hassan was elected in the 'controversial' election of February 15, 1996 as a BNP candidate but was defeated to Awami League (AL) candidate Abdul Mannan in June 12 election in the same year.

Some JP leaders talking to this correspondent claimed that prospects for their possible candidate Abul Kashem is bright this time because of intra-party feud in BNP.



Abul Kashem



Mahmudul Hassan



Moniruzzaman Bulbul

Worker hurt as 3 beams of RU building collapse

Faulty design alleged

RU CORRESPONDENT

A construction worker was injured when three beams of under-construction Rajshahi University Teachers Students Cultural Center (TSCC) building collapsed yesterday.

The university authorities had ordered suspension of the construction work year ago when fault in the design was detected. But the firm resumed the work recently without modifying the design, sources said.

Construction worker Haider Ali said that the beams collapsed at around 12.30 pm when five workers were working there.

Yasin Ali was injured as rubbish fell on him. He was rescued from under debris by others.

Rajshahi University Chief Engineer Abdur Rahman said, a Dhaka-based firm prepared the design as the university has no construction design cell. The firm was earlier asked to modify the faulty design, he said.

RU VC Prof Altaf Hossain told newsmen that order was issued to stop the construction after fault was detected in the design.

Construction of the building started in July last year involving Tk 1.25 crore.

A Dhaka-based construction firm prepared the design in 1990.

Bid to occupy college hostel in Satkhira

Twenty female students hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

A female students' hostel of Kumira Women's College in Tala upazila was attacked allegedly by activists of Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal yesterday, injuring at least 20 students.

The attackers, allegedly engaged by a local BNP leader, drove out the students and occupied the building. They damaged its doors and windows and allegedly looted cash amounting to over Tk 1 lakh and other valuables from students. During the attack, they assaulted some female students, some of them alleged.

The victims include Jamuna Rani, Prabhati Rani, Reshma, Rizia, Shyamoli, Tumpa, Bilkis, Sheuli, Urmii, Sujata, Monowara, Purnima and others.

Quoting local people, police said BNP leader Manir Hossain had a long-standing dispute with one Shymol Ghosh over one acre of land where Shymol built a two-story building five years ago. Kumira Women's College authorities rented the building and turned it into a hostel where 68 got accommodation.

The BNP leader filed an eviction suit with a judge court. The court delivered judgement in his favour and asked the resident students to evict the land within October 10.

On contact, Tala Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mostafizur Rahman termed the attack barbaric while BNP secretary Samsuzzaman Bablu demanded punishment to the attackers belonging to his party.

Once wild, orchids now a household word

AMINUL ISLAM, *Mymensingh*

Orchids produced in Phulbaria is gaining name and fame to become a new source of foreign exchange.

Deepta Orchid, a private enterprise at Dulma Enayetpur in the upazila, is a front runner in introducing the non-traditional item in the country.

The farm was set up on 11 acres of land in 2002 with 80,000 orchid plants collected from Thailand. It now produces around 70,000 orchid sticks amonth.

Now, the farm has over three lakh plants with 25 varieties of orchids including some rare ones. These have good market at home and abroad round the year.

Some of the varieties produced there include Dendrobium Pink, Dendrobium Sonia, Dendrobium Sato, Dendrobium Earsa Kul, Dendrobium White, Red Bull, Miss Singapore and White Faiben. Orchid flowers produced at Deepta Orchid are classified into three grades according to their quality.

"Demand for our orchids from local and foreign clients is high but we are yet to have that scope", said farm in-charge horticulturist Kazi Sharif Mahmud.

"Our orchids are better than those produced in other Asian countries. Bangladesh's climate is better suited for orchid cultivation", he said.

Orchids are exported to many countries including USA, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Denmark and Italy.

"We sell 80 per cent of our products in local markets in Dhaka and Chittagong. We sold orchids



worth Tk 46 lakh last year", Sharif said.

The farm purchased another five acres land this year at Sagardighi in Ghatail in Tangail district for expansion of the project.

Sharif said the business was good last year and all the products were sold. It is dull this year due to political turmoil. Sales decline drastically during Ramadan, he said.

Prof Dr Md Azizul Haque of the Department of Horticulture at Bangladesh Agricultural University

(BAU) told the Daily Star that orchid cultivation can grow as an industry in the country because of the moderate climate. The rainy season is conducive for orchid cultivation.

Many attractive varieties of orchids grow naturally in Madhupur forests and Chittagong Hill Tracts. These can be grown commercially for export.

TANORE-GODAGARI CONSTITUENCY

BNP in bad book of indigenous voters, annoyed Jamaat

Intra-party feud, alleged links with militants erode party's image further



ANWAR ALI, *Rajshahi*

Apart from intra-party feud with senior BNP leaders, Post and Telecommunication Minister Aminul Haque will be facing strong opposition from alliance partner Jamaat-e-Islami in Rajshahi-1 (Tanore-Godagari) constituency in the coming election. Aminul is the probable candidate from BNP, party sources said.

Prof Mujibor Rahman Chowdhury, assistant secretary general of central Jamaat and president of its labour front Sramik Kallyan Federation has already launched campaign in the area.

Aminul Haque also faces trouble following the allegation by ousted BNP lawmaker Abu Hena that Aminul is among several party lawmakers who had links with Bangla Bhai, kingpin of Islamist militants. The militant leader is now on death row.

Aminul is also facing people's criticism for government's failure in containing price spiral and ensuring smooth power supply, party sources said.

The price hike of essentials has hit the indigenous people hard, who comprise a good portion of the electorate in his constituency, they said.

This time, due to the price spiral, the indigenous people and poorer section of rural folk in the two upazilas may turn their face away from Aminul Haque, who won the seat three times since 1991.

"It will not be surprising if Jamaat and a large faction in BNP support Haque's opponent in the next election.

In that case, he will witness stiff competition from possible Awami League candidate Omar Faruk Chowdhury", a senior party leader told this correspondent seeking anonymity.

Science and Technology Affairs Secretary of Rajshahi district Awami League engineer Shafikul Islam and former deputy inspector general of police Motiur Rahman are among AL ticket seekers, but ultimately they would not go against the party nominee, AL sources said.

Aminul Haque tried for AL nomination in 1991. AL nominated elderly party leader Muhammad Mohsin. He joined politics with BNP

2001, party men said.

Senior Jamaat leaders said they will field Prof Mujibor in Rajshahi-1 even if the four-party alliance does not nominate a Jamaat man in the constituency.

They also claimed that local Jamaat leaders in Godagari and Tanore upazilas are annoyed with Aminul Haque for various reasons.

They claimed that Aminul did not keep his promise to leave the Godagari municipality chairman post for Jamaat candidate in the last municipal election.

Aminul loyalist Anwarul Islam Chowdhury defeated Jamaat candidate Abdul Malek. Aminul also

On the other hand, Aminul developed rivalry with a number of senior and dedicated BNP leaders by 'not evaluating them' in last five years, party sources said. Aminul, also minister-in-charge for Rajshahi district, has 'cold relation' with Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP over party affairs.

Dissident party leaders including Tanore municipal chairman Emran Ali Mollah, former poura BNP president Sajahan Ali, former upazila BNP president Aminul Islam, Abdul Mazid, Rabiul Alam, Sekandor Ali Baby and many others openly declared their opposition to Aminul.

BNP insiders said, district BNP secretary Shish Muhammad and BNP adherent Abdul Mazid Master who face charges of extortion remained with the minister as he campaigned from them in Mundumala and Kakonhat municipal elections.

Mazid, accused in a rape case, was granted bail while the rape victim is awaiting justice for 17 years.

Besides, there are allegations that Aminul placed his relatives in important party posts in the district.

Godagari municipal BNP president Rafikul Islam, general secretary Anwarul Islam Chowdhury and vice president Manzur Chowdhury are his maternal uncles and organising secretary Enamul Haque and assistant secretary Sarwar Jahan are his relatives.

The National Aborigines' Council may also field a candidate as there are about 50,000 aborigines in the two upazilas.



Aminul Haque



Omar Faruk Chowdhury

ticket and won the 2001 election with a big margin of 46,446 votes. He got 130,631 votes against newcomer Omar Faruk Chowdhury's 84,185.

A former president of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Faruk is now general secretary of district AL. He has been maintaining close contact with people in different areas of the constituency since his defeat in

campaigning for Anwarul, they claimed.

BNP-Jamaat relation turned sour when Aminul fielded his men in Mundumala and Kakonhat municipal elections, they said.

Jamaat leaders claimed they have a vote bank in the area. In 1996 election, the party was in third position with 16.16 per cent votes. Their position is better now, they claimed.



A citizens' body formed a human chain in Sirajganj town yesterday demanding construction of a permanent flood protection dam on the western bank of Jamuna river stretching from Ranigran to Shimla.

Outlaws kill 2 party rivals

A CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Janajuddho cadres of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) killed two rivals belonging to PBCP-Lal Pataka in Ataikula thana early Sunday.

Police and locals said, PBCP Janajuddho cadres kidnapped Mokbul Hossain, 35, son of Iman Ali and Yakub, 32, son of Joinuddin of Lohagora village from their houses Saturday midnight. Abductors chopped and killed them and threw the bodies in a water body at Falta.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent those to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Janajuddho claimed responsibility of the murders.