



Workers and employees of four laid-off jute mills brought out a big procession in Khalishpur yesterday protesting the BJMC decision.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Jute workers protest lay-off of four Khalishpur mills

Showcause notices on CBA leaders for agitation during emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Workers and employees of jute mills brought out a procession in Khalishpur yesterday evening in protest against lay-off of four state-owned jute mills.

The processionists chanted slogans against lay-off of Peoples Jute Mills, Platinum Jute Mill, Crescent Jute Mill and Star Jute Mill.

The lay-off was declared by BJMC on Thursday following violent agitation by workers for payment of arrear wages and removal of what they called corrupt officials of jute mills.

Yesterday's procession was

however peaceful. Security forces did not take any action.

A large number of police and BDR personnel were deployed in Khalishpur industrial belt.

An uneasy calm is prevailing in Khalishpur and Atra industrial belts following lay -ff of four state-owned jute mills with effect from yesterday.

Over 14,000 workers and employees of the four mills were thrown out of employment by the lay-off though they are entitled to get fifty percent of their basic wages for 45 days after the lay-off.

Neither BJMC authorities nor the Joint Director of Labour could

say anything if these four jute mills would be reopened before or after 45 days.

The Joint Director of Labour (JDL), Khulna, issued letters on Thursday to CBA leaders of the four jute mills, asking them to show cause by Sunday (April 22) why legal action would not be taken against them for 'inciting workers to stop work, hampering production and launching agitation violating emergency rules'.

"The JDL will exercise the right to cancel registration of trade unions of these four jute mills if he is not satisfied with replies to the show- cause notices issue to CBA

Leaders", the letters said.

Some top leaders of Patkal Sangram Parishad (PSP) in Khulna told Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Commissioner on Thursday that they were not involved in the current agitation by jute mill workers.

They could not also give any information to KMP Commissioner who were behind the agitation and attack on law enforces since Tuesday. Meanwhile, SI Mazanur Rahman filed a case with Daulatpur police station on Thursday against 3000 mill workers charging them with 'rioting and arson.

Several meetings on arrear payment held in Dhaka

BJMC chairman says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) Chairman Md Ataharul Islam faxed a letter to Khulna Divisional Commissioner and KMP Commissioner on Friday explaining the real situation regarding allocation of fund by government for payment of Tk 60 crore arrear wages of workers and employees of 8 jute mills in Khulna region.

The BJMC chairman mentioned in his letter that several meetings were held recently with ministries of jute and finance. BJMC requested higher authorities for placing funds for payment of 14 weeks' arrear wages and salaries, the letter said, according to sources here yesterday. The BJMC chairman hoped that government would respond positively to resolve the crisis in eight state-owned jute mills.

According to BJMC chairman, there are 22 state-owned jute mills in the country including 8 in Khulna-Jessore region.

Total amount of arrear wages and salaries of workers and employees of the 22 jute mills stands at Tk 100 crore, he said.

8 hurt in Sirajganj bus robbery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

At least eight bus passengers were injured and cash and valuables worth Tk 7 lakh looted from a bus by armed robbers on the Dhaka-Kushtia Highway in Hamkuria area in Tarash upazila early yesterday, police and eyewitnesses said.

They said a gang of armed robbers numbering about 15 halted the Dhaka-bound bus coming from Kushtia by placing timber on the highway at about 2.00 am.

The robbers held the passengers hostage and looted cash, gold ornament, cell phone and other valuables at gunpoint. As some passengers protested, the robbers beat them up injuring them seriously. The injured were admitted to Natore and Sirajganj sadar hospitals. Of the injured, the condition of six passengers is critical, hospital sources said.

Locals and passengers have complained to this correspondent that incidents of robbery are on the rise in the area in recent time due to indifference of highway police. They urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to halt the robbery incidents.

Seven BNP leaders sued in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Seven BNP leaders including two Union Parishad (UP) chairmen of Kalaroa and Sadar upazilas were sued for their alleged involvement in cheating, extortion, looting shrimp and felling down trees on Thursday night and Wednesday.

The accused are Keragachhi Union Parishad (UP) chairman Ashraf Hossain of Kalaroa upazila, Labsa UP chairman Abdul Alim of Sadar upazila, Atiar Rahman and Rafiqul Islam of Taltala, Zia of Binerpota, Shahin of Khejurdanga and Ashraf Ali of Rajnagar in Sadar upazila.

Abdur Rahman, a trader of sanitary wares hailing from Boalia village in Kalaroa upazila filed a cheating case with Kalaroa Police Station against Keragachhi UP chairman Ashraf Hossain at about 8 pm on Thursday.

He alleged that the UP chairman purchased huge rings and slabs worth Tk 3,06,240 on credit from his shop for the purpose of sanitation coverage in his area in 2006.

On request to pay the entire

outstanding amount, the UP chairman threatened him.

Earlier, joint forces arrested him from Balladanga Bazaar in Kalaroa upazila on January 28. Now he is in jail custody, police said.

On contact, Kalaroa Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Farid Uddin confirmed the report.

Another villager, Abul Hossain of Magura village in Labsa union filed a case with Sadar Police Station against three BNP leaders including Labsa UP chairman Abdul Alim of Sadar upazila on Wednesday night. He alleged that the BNP men felled down Mehagani trees worth Tk 20,000 from the courtyard of his house on February 10 last year.

In his complaint, Hossain said he did not file case against the culprits at that time fearing reprisal from the accused.

When contacted, Sadar Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Safiqur Rahman confirmed the incident.

Maniruzzaman, a shrimp cultivator of Katia Master Para in Sadar upazila filed another case with

Sadar Police Station accusing six BNP leaders including Labsa UP chairman Abdul Alim for allegedly looting shrimps and demanding illegal toll amounting to Tk 5 lakh from him on October 15 last year. On refusal, the accused armed with deadly weapons attacked his shrimp enclosure in Magura in Labsa union under Sadar upazila on October 17 night. They beat up the staff of the enclosure and looted shrimp worth about Tk 3 lakh, the complainant said.

Other accused in the case are Atiar Rahman and Rafiqul Islam of Taltala, Zia of Binerpota, Shahin of Khejurdanga and Ashraf Ali of Rajnagar in Sadar upazila.

Earlier, joint forces arrested Labsa UP chairman Abdul Alim from the town on April 9. He is now in jail custody, police said.

Abdul Alim and Ashraf Hossain were two most powerful men during the BNP-Jamaat led 4-party Alliance rule. They were close associates of former BNP lawmaker Habibur Islam Habib elected from Satkhira-1 (Tala-Kalaroa) constituency.

Ex-MP Shahidul's nephew arrested in Khulna

Lablu faces 18 cases

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Former BNP lawmaker Sahidul Islam's nephew Lablu Malitha, who was wanted in several cases including some for murder, was arrested in Khulna along with an accomplice Thursday night. They were brought to Bheramara yesterday.

In another incident, Rapid Action battalion (Rab) in a raid arrested two alleged arms traders from Daulatpur in Kushtia on the same night.

Kushtia police said, joint forces in Mongla were tipped-off that an alleged criminal from Kushtia was hiding at a cement factory there. The joint forces raided the factory and arrested Zahidul Islam alias Lablu Malitha and his accomplice Yasin Ali.

Lablu is son of Shahidul Islam's elder brother Nurul Islam Malitha. Shahidul Islam was elected lawmaker twice from Kushtia-2 con-

stituency. It was alleged that Lablu was responsible for various crimes, corruption and misdeeds during Shahidul Islam's 10-year tenure.

Lablu was accused in at least 18 cases including seven for murder, Kushtia police said. The cases include one for a triple murder, police added.

Lablu was a 'listed criminal' in Kushtia but could not be arrested as he was nephew of BNP lawmaker Sahidul, police said.

A team from Bheramara police station brought back Lablu to Bheramara police station yesterday afternoon. He was being interrogated when the report was filed yesterday evening.

In another incident, Rapid Action battalion (Rab) in a raid arrested two alleged arms traders from Daulatpur upazila in the district.

Rab sources said that Rab was informed that one Rabiul Islam, son

of Hazi Moslem Uddin of Sahapur in Daulatpur upazila, was involved in illegal arms trading.

Rab communicated with Rabiul in the guise of arms buyer.

After bargaining, Rabiul asked them to come his house Thursday evening.

Two Rab teams went to Rabiul's house in guise of arms buyer.

Rabiul did not appear before Rab. He sent two persons--Zakir Hossain and Safiqul Islam--along with the arms to the 'buyers'. Rab arrested them and recovered two US made 7.65-bore pistols and 53 bullets from them.

Rabiul is absconding, Rab said. The arrested persons were being quizzed at Rab office, Rab sources said yesterday.

Salaries stopped at 3 Barisal educational institutions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

The authorities declined to sign the monthly payment orders (MPO) of two colleges and a madrasa in Barisal as they were set up in government land and without following rules.

The institutions are Barisal City College, A Karim Ideal College and Somertoban Mohila Madrasa.

Sources said, Barisal City College was established by a BNP leader Advocate Rashid Khan, also principal of the college, on the government land worth about taka 1 core during 1991-96 period of BNP regime. The college was established not fulfilling conditions in opening an educational institution.

A Karim Ideal College was established by Ebaidul Huq Chan after the name of his father on government land at Palashpur in 1995. College authority recruited 18 teachers to teach 13 subjects without adequate students and did not maintain standard of education.

Somertoban Mohila Madrasa's also facing same allegations and educational activities of this institution often disrupted in last six months due to internal conflicts.

Pronoy Kanti Biswas, Additional Deputy Commissioner acknowledging the facts said the actions were taken after education ministry ordered to stop payment of government portion of the salaries and benefits of teachers and other staffs of those educational institutions who have not owned any land and did not maintain due rules to establish and run educational institutions.

BNP leader held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Joint forces yesterday arrested BNP leader and Durgapur Pourasabha chairman Saidur Rahman Mantu on charge of corruption, police said.

Police said Mantu was arrested from an area near the municipality office under emergency ordinance. Later, he was handed over to police.

There are allegations of misuse of power, extortion, tender manipulation, vandalism, beating commissioners and encouraging criminal activities against him, police said.

10X3

10X3

4X2