

FOUR LAID-OFF JUTE MILLS IN KHULNA

CBA leaders 'extorted' Tk 5cr from workers

Mill authorities claim, plan to take legal action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Thirty-three leaders of collective bargaining agents (CBA) at four laid off state-owned jute mills have allegedly extorted about Tk 5 crore from 22,000 workers in last five years, mill authorities said.

The leaders forcibly took away the amount from the workers' pay slips, they said.

Managements of the mills concerned are planning to take legal action against the CBA leaders.

The CBA leaders accused of

extorting money from workers include 14 at Crescent Jute Mills, eight at Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills, six at People's Jute Mills and five at Star Jute Mills.

They forced workers to pay 30 per cent of their arrear wages 'as tips'. They threatened workers of losing jobs in case of non-payment of tips, said a BJMC Zonal Office official.

The lists of the leaders have been sent to the ministry of jute, BJMC chairman and officials concerned of the law enforcing agencies, for necessary action, he said.

BJMC Zonal Office also prepared a list of 300 workers and employees of four mills who drew salaries, wages and other financial benefits without work and hampered mill production.

'Action will be taken against them as was done against 700 workers and employees of Crescent Jute Mills in last three months,' said a BJMC official who did not want to be named.

BJMC sources said the jute mills authorities issued pay slips for future claim when they could not

pay arrear wages to workers due to financial crisis.

CBA leaders purchased the pay slips from workers without giving 30 percent of their wages, said BJMC zonal coordinator Shamim Ahmed who termed the practice 'illegal'.

'We cannot pay arrear wages to anyone but to real worker against whom bill slips were issued,' he said.

A Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) high official said they have taken a drive to arrest the corrupt CBA leaders.



Danida Advisor Peter Quist formally launching current season's sale of shrimp fries in Patuakhali yesterday. The fries were produced in hatcheries with Danida technical assistance.

ATTACK ON PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE 26 JCD men sued in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A case has been filed under the Speedy Trial Act against 26 Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists at Satkhira Government College including its college unit president Abu Taher for attacking the principal's office on May 3.

Principal of the college Prof. Sukumar Das filed the case with Satkhira sadar police station Saturday evening. The principal was allegedly confined in his room for about an hour by the JCD activists, sources said.

According to the FIR, a group of JCD activists led by Abu Taher went to the principal on May 3 demanding that the probe report on the April 24 attack on JCD men by Islami Chhatra Shibir on the campus be made public.

The principal told them that the report would be published after a

meeting of the Academic Council of the college.

But they demanded that the report be made public immediately. Then they ransacked the office and damaged windowpanes and furniture. They also confined the principal for about an hour. Police rushed to the college and rescued the principal, the FIR said.

On April 24, a group of Shibir activists attacked JCD men when students were enjoying the World Cup cricket match at Shahid Zia Hall.

On the following day, the college authorities formed a probe committee to investigate the matter.

On contact, principal Prof. Sukumar Das said the case was filed as per a decision of the Academic Council.

Sadar thana Officer-in-charge Safiqur Rahman confirmed filing of the case and said they are trying to nab the accused.

4.5X2

6X2

6X2

2 extortionists arrested in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Joint forces in separate raids yesterday arrested two alleged extortionists in Khagrachhari.

They are Nagor Chakma and Tatindra Lal Chakma.

Police said, acting on a tip-off, joint forces raided Nagor Chakma's Baradom village home in Dighinala upazila in the morning and arrested him. During interrogation he confessed that his gang led by Tatindra Lal Chakma were involved in collecting toll from different NGO officials and transports, police said.

He also told police that his men demanded Tk 2.5 lakh from Grameen Bank officials in Khagrachhari and looted Tk 26,000 from its staff when they were returning after collecting weekly installments.

Acting on his statement, joint forces raided the house of Tatindra Lal Chakma at Nenchi Bazar at noon and arrested him.

Earlier, Grameen Bank suspended activities at five of its offices in Khagrachhari following demands for toll by extortionists.

Police sources said, a gang of armed cadres 'closed' five Grameen Bank offices for refusing to pay them, Tk 2.5 lakh as toll.

Police also said the armed cadres also threatened Grameen Bank officials in other areas of the hill district.

Transport union leader arrested in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Joint forces yesterday arrested general secretary of Dinajpur Motor Paribahan Samik Union and North Bengal Transport Samik Union Mojibor Rahman on charge of extortion, creating anarchy and land grabbing.

Police said, acting on a tip-off, joint forces led by Lt. Mashur Rahman raided Mojibor's house at Sheikhpurpur in Dinajpur yesterday.

He was handed over to Dinajpur police.

Police said Mojibor went into hiding soon after takeover by the caretaker government. He returned home recently.

4X1

4x3

More funds demanded to develop greater Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Speakers at a meeting on development of greater Khulna yesterday demanded project-wise allocation of funds on priority basis in next national budget for development of greater Khulna.

They hoped that the caretaker government would come forward to fulfill demands of the people of greater Khulna and take steps to utilize resources in the region, particularly frozen foods, to earn foreign exchange.

The pre-budget meeting was presided over by president of Greeter Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee (GKDACC) and editor of Dainik Purbanchal Liaquat Ali. The speakers included former Awami League

(AL) lawmaker Enayet Ali, former general secretary of Khulna city BNP Nazrul Islam Manzu, chairperson of Khulna Nagarik Forum Shaikh Abdul Kayum, advocate Syeda Sabina Sultan, advocate Kudrat-e-Khuda and president of Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry Shaharuzzaman Martuza.

City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman and Vice Chancellor of Khulna University Prof Dr. Mahbubur Rahman attended the discussion meeting as chief guest and special guest respectively.

The meeting was jointly organised by GKDACC, Khulna Nagarik Forum and Khulna Nagarik Committee.

Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman said that he would spare no pains

to fight for realising the legitimate rights of people of greater Khulna. He called for united efforts by all irrespective of party affiliations to achieve this goal.

Liaquat Ali called for unity of all political leaders to put pressure on the government to allocate more funds in the next national budget to implement development projects. The projects demanded by people for long include construction of Padma bridge at Mawa, modernisation of Mongla port, reopening of Khulna News Print Mills, installation of a 210 MW power plant in Khulna, supply of pipeline gas and reopening of laid-off mills.

The meeting was held at the Purbanchal Dialogue Centre in the city.

100 goats die of PPR disease in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A deadly viral disease of goats named Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) has broken out in Dimla upazila in an epidemic form.

About 100 goats died and several hundreds were attacked with the disease in last 10 days, local people said.

District livestock officer Dr Sekandar Ali said the disease has spread in some villages of the upazila after their distribution by an NGO named Bangladesh Rural Improvement Foundation (BRIF), based at Goalabdi village in Dinajpur. The goats were sick and PPR infected, Dr Sekandar said.

On contact, BRIF team leader Shuhon Hossain said before distribution the goats were vaccinated to prevent from PPR disease, but the vaccine proved to be ineffective, he said.

On contact, BRIF executive director Shah Ahsan Habib said we are yet to confirm whether the goats died of PPR disease or not. We have already sent dead bodies of goats to the Livestock Department of Bangladesh Agricultural University (DAU) in Mymensingh for examination.

On contact, Dimla upazila veterinary surgeon Dr Abdus Sobhan said the deadly disease broke out a month ago. The disease can be called 'plague' of goats. He said in most cases the disease is not curable. 'But it can be prevented through vaccination', he said.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in separate drives arrested two more suspected members of Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from Gangachara yesterday.

They are Azizul Islam, 35, of Moubhaba village and Mahfuz Alam Bhutto, 33, of Changmari village in the upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team arrested Mahfuz Alam Bhutto from the ground of Gangachara High School at about 10 am. Rab said he was scheduled to meet some other JMB members there.

Maj. Bari of Rab-5 said Bhutto was accused for involvement in the August 17 countrywide serial bomb blasts in 2005. He was absconding since then, Rab sources said.

In another drive, a joint team of Rab and police arrested Azizul Islam from his house at Moubhaba.

He is assistant teacher at Modamodan High School in Kounia upazila.

Police said, Azizul is a listed JMB member.

Meanwhile, Gangachara police on Thursday took three alleged JMB members on five days' remand.

Police said Masud was a hardened criminal in the area and was involved in many crimes.

Abul Masud was given 32 years' imprisonment by Rajshahi Speedy Trial Tribunal in 2003 in two murder cases.

He was tried in absentia, police said.

Acting on a tip-off a police team led by SI Bodruddoza and ASI Kayum raided the village and arrested him when he came out of a mosque after Jumaprayar.

Police said Masud was a hardened criminal in the area and was involved in many crimes.

On contact, Dimla upazila

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5x4

6X2

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