

UGC probe into SUST irregularities begins

Records depositions of teachers, officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A high level team from University Grants Commission (UGC) yesterday started probe into alleged irregularities in Shahjalal University of Science & Technology (SUST) during the past government.

The 3-men probe body led by UGC member Prof Mohammad Mahbub Ullah reached Sylhet yesterday morning and began work. It includes UGC member Md. Sultan Hossain and Deputy Director Prof Dr. Mizanur Rahman.

Registrar of the university Jamil Ahmed Chowdhury said, a good number of SUST teachers and officials have already listed their names to testify before the probe body.

SUST Vice Chancellor Prof M Aminul Islam, Dean of School of Life Sciences Prof Habibul Ahsan and Controller of Examinations Saliquur Rahman Chowdhury met the probe body on their arrival on the campus,

Jamil Ahmed said.

Killing of SUST student Mosharraf Hossain Shamim, vandalism at the official residence of the VC on May 14 last year, alleged corruption by immediate past Vice Chancellor Mosleh Uddin Ahmed and irregularities during the last government will be probed by the UGC team, sources said.

Teachers, officials and employees gave statements before the probe committee, which began at 11 am and continued when the report was filed at about 7 pm. Their depositions will continue till 10 pm, a member of the probe body said.

When contacted, probe body chief Prof Mahbub Ullah declined to say anything.

"We have just started our work. We will look into complaints so that a congenial academic atmosphere in real sense can be brought back to the campus", he said.

"We will allow deposition till Sunday afternoon", he said.

Earlier in September 2002, a probe committee led by UGC member Prof Dr. AKM Muhsin detected irregularities in purchase of Tk 2 crore books for the university library, certificate forgery and other acts of corruption.

Prof Musleh Uddin Ahmed was appointed Pro VC of the university on February 14, 2002 and made VC after a few months. Before he resigned on May 14 last year in the face of students' protest following death of a student in police firing.

The unrest on the campus ensued after a clash between students of the university and a nearby private medical college.

There are allegations of corruption and illegal appointment by Prof Musleh Uddin Ahmed on political considerations. Sources in the probe team said most of the complainants spoke against the former vice-chancellor.

Prof Musleh Uddin appointed 155 teachers, 51 officials and 134 employees during his 18-month tenure.

Arms recovered, 7 arrested in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Army personnel in separate raids in Khagrachhari yesterday recovered some arms and ammunition and arrested seven alleged criminals.

Sources in the security forces said, acting on a tiff-off, an army team raided Sadurkil village in Guimara and arrested criminals with two SBBL guns, two country-made guns and three bullets.

The arrestees are Amal Bikash Chakma, Niranjon Chakma and Gourki Chakma. They confessed to their involved in toll collection from different organisation and transports, the sources said.

In a other drive army men recovered one SBBL gun at Chowdhurygaht. None could be arrested.

In Baghaiochhari, the army arrested four alleged toll collectors.

The arrestees are Shantimoy Chakma, Jyotimoy Chakma, Kushum Chakma and Ranjan Chakma.

'Implement August 30 deal on Phulbari coal mine'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Speakers at a workshop here yesterday urged the government to implement the agreement on Phulbari coal mine signed on August 30 last year with the National Committee to Protect Oil and Gas Resources.

The workshop, held at Dinajpur Press Club, was organised by Dinajpur unit of the National Committee.

They said the August 30 agreement signed by two ministers of former BNP-led alliance government provided for cancellation of the agreement signed earlier with Asia Energy for exploration of Phulbari coal.

They said the 1998 agreement allowed Asia Energy to extract coal from Phulbari mine through open pit method. The agreement was 'detrimental' to national interest, they claimed.

LAID-OFF JUTE MILLS IN KHULNA-JESSORE

Crucial meeting today on reopening mills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

BJMC chairman Ataharul Islam who reached Khulna from Dhaka yesterday afternoon will hold a high level meeting at Khalishpur today with general managers and deputy general managers of eight state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt.

He was accompanied by BJMC Director of Finance Harisuddin and Driector of Marketing Syed Abu Raithan.

According to BJMC Zonal Coordinator Shamim Ahmed, the present financial condition of jute mills, amount of loans so far taken from different banks and total amount of money to be needed for reopening the laid-off off mills will be discussed in detail at the meeting.

Shamim Ahmed told this correspondent that ways and means would be devised to reopen the laid-off mills, considering the growing demand for jute products at home and abroad.

This would require a huge amount of money to revitalise the jute mills by removing alleged corruption and politicisation of CBAs (collective bargaining agents), he said.

"Fate of the laid-off jute mills, however, depends on tomorrow's (Sunday) high level meeting", Shamim Ahmed said.

The situation arising out of refusal by workers to go on voluntary retirement without receiving full payment of their all arrears will also be discussed at the meeting.

Workers and employees of Crescent Jute Mills, Peoples Jute Mills, Star Jute Mills and Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills stopped work from April 15 and launched movement from April 16 demanding payment of arrear salary and

wages s, violating emergency rules.

The four jute mills were laid off on April 10 following clashes between security forces and mill workers in Khalispur industrial belt.

The clashes left one worker dead and over 100 people injured. Abdur Rahman Munshi, a worker of Crescent Jute Mill, succumbed to injuries on April 21 while under treatment at the Khulna Medical

College Hospital.

Seventy workers picked up during combing operation in labour colonies of the four Jute mills are still in Khulna district jail after being shown arrested under Emergency Power Act.

Lay-off of the mills was extended by 15 days more with effect from May 10 by an order of BJMC chairman which fuelled the tension among workers of Khulna industrial belt.



PHOTO: STAR

There was a long snarl-up of vehicles on Dhaka-Tangail road as traffic was stopped for about 10 hours after a slab of a bridge at Kalihati collapsed into the river in the early hours of yesterday. Traffic resumed after R&H men repaired it at around 1 pm.

6.5X3

5X2

7X3

5.5X2

12X3