

Chaos, clash mark Cox's Bazar BNP confce: 60 injured

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least 60 leaders and activists, including Joint Secretary General of BNP central committee Selima Rahman and former state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed, were injured in a clash at the conference of Cox's Bazar district unit at local stadium on Friday night.

Lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-1 constituency Hasina Ahmed and lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-3 constituency Lutfar Rahman Kajal are also among the injured.

Party sources said the trouble began while the chief guest was announcing the committee of the district unit, 'ignoring' the views of the councilors.

Thirty-two leaders spoke at the conference with district BNP Convener and former lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury in the chair.

After a brief speech, chief guest Selima Rahman started announcing the names of the office-bearers at around 9:30pm. She first announced the names of former MP and present convener of the district committee Shahjahan Chowdhury and ATM Nurul Bashir as president and vice-president of the new committee. The leaders and activists present at the conference accepted the two as



PHOTO: STAR

BNP activists, aggrieved at the announcement of the name of new district committee general secretary, vent their wrath on leaders at the council venue in Cox's Bazar Stadium on Friday night.

their leaders.

But when Selima announced the name of advocate Shamim Ara Swapna as general secretary of the unit some leaders and activists objected to it and started throwing chairs at the leaders sitting on the dais.

At this stage, the BNP men got divided into two groups and locked in a clash. They chased each other and damaged chairs and tables at the conference venue.

Police reached the spot at 10:00pm, dispersed the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

Later, a press release

signed by Shahjahan Chowdhury was released. The release mentioned the names of new office-bearers - Shahjahan Chowdhury, president, ATM Nurul Bashir Chowdhury, vice president, advocate Shamim Ara Swapna, general secretary, Rafiqul Huda Chowdhury and advocate Nurul Alam, assistant general secretaries, and Jamil Ibrahim Chowdhury, organising secretary.

On November 17, the council of BNP Chittagong city unit was postponed amid intra-party clashes.

Our Staff Correspondent

from Sylhet adds: The rival factions of Habiganj district BNP could not hold their councils yesterday as local administration imposed Section 144 in the town, apprehending deterioration of the law and order situation.

District BNP Convener Syed Mohammad Faisal led faction and joint convener Minhaj Uddin Chowdhury and Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury-led faction were earlier announced to hold the district unit conference at Shiristala in the town at the same time.

BNP factions in Magura hold confce separately

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A faction of Magura BNP led by district Convener Kabir Murad held Sreepur upazila unit conference yesterday while Joint Convener advocate Mokaddes Hossain led faction held the conference of Mohammadpur upazila unit the same day.

Sreepur BNP conference was held at local girls' high school ground with upazila unit Convener Ashrafur Alam in the chair. Kabir Murad attended the conference as chief guest while district joint convener advocate Ahmed Hossain and Syed Mokaddes Ali as special guests.

Advocate Mokaddes Hossain led faction of the upazila unit has announced that it will hold the conference of the upazila unit tomorrow.

"We shall hold our council on Monday and most of the union level leaders are with us", claimed Golam Mustafa, joint convener of Sreepur upazila BNP.

Rivals held Mohammadpur

upazila unit conference on the premises of RSKH Institute at upazila headquarters yesterday.

Chaired by upazila BNP Joint Convener Akhteruzzaman, the conference was addressed, among others, by Mohammad Nazimuddin, Iqbal Akhter Khan, Principal Matiuir Rahman and advocate Sakawat Hossain.

Upazila unit Convener Alimuzzaman, who belongs to Kabir Murad faction, has fixed November 23 for council of the unit.

Talking to this correspondent, Alimuzzaman said Joint Convener Akhter has no right to hold upazila conference.

He held the council violating the party constitution, Alimuzzaman added.

Internal feud in Magura BNP surfaced after formation of the district convening committee in June this year with Kabir Murad as convener.

The conflict has now spread to upazila, municipal and union levels.

BCL blocks road in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday barricaded Dhaka-Rajshahi highway for one and a half hours protesting Shibir activities under the nose of police at Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet).

Several hundred BCL activists from Ruet, Rajshahi University (RU) and city units sat down on the highway in front of Ruet at Aukroy crossing halting vehicular traffic, witnesses said.

They demanded removal of officer-in-charge (OC) of Motihar police station alleging that Shibir was carrying out its activities with his blessing despite ban on politics on campus.

The agitating BCL men withdrew the barricade at around 2:30pm after police held a meeting with Ruet authorities and assured BCL leaders that they (police) will not allow any political activities at Ruet.

Earlier, the Ruet students welfare adviser Ashrafur Alam had a scuffle with the OC as the latter ignored his request for stopping Shibir politics on the campus.

As political activities are

banned on all Rajshahi campuses, both BCL and Shibir activists gathered at Ruet main gate for welcoming the admission seekers at around 12:30pm.

At one stage, the Shibir men started chanting slogans and distributing leaflets among the admission seekers inside the campus while BCL activists were doing it outside the gate, said Al Amin, a Ruet BCL leader.

"As the Shibir men entered the campus, we drew the attention of police and later complained to the students' adviser", said Amin.

Adviser Ashrafur Alam, witnessing the matter, asked police to take appropriate action, he said.

But police, instead of taking any action, locked in altercation and scuffle with Alam, witnesses said.

Ruet Shibir president Golam Arif claimed they began chanting slogan after the BCL men started it. Contacted, OC Tofazzal Hossain blamed the Ruet students' adviser 'for siding with' BCL protesters.

"We did not go for action against the Shibir men for the sake of peace on campus. If he (Alam) had not uttered any provocative words, no untoward incident would have occurred," the OC said.

'Build awareness, raise voice to resist Tipaimukh project'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Prof Muzaffer Ahmed yesterday emphasised awareness building and raising voice at home and abroad to resist Tipaimukh project in the Indian state of Manipur as the mega project would bring ecological disaster in the state as well as large downstream areas in Bangladesh.

"Manipur University in India has conducted the highest volume of works on the Tipaimukh project but we are

much behind in this respect," Prof Muzaffer said at a regional convention styled 'Surma-Kushiyara-Meghna Basin Regional Convention' at M Saifur Rahman Auditorium in Sylhet city.

He was addressing as the chief guest there.

About a thousand people from 12 districts of greater Sylhet, Comilla, Mymensingh and Narayanganj joined the daylong programme organised by Tipaimukh Bandh Protirodh Andolon, Sylhet to create mass awareness about the adverse

effects of the project.

"Unfortunately our parliamentary team which had a trip to India did not visit Manipur state. And so, the Manipur people and organisations that have been vehemently protesting the mega project, could not discuss with the team members," Prof Muzaffer said.

On invitation from India to join the All India Conference on Tipai Project last month, a team from Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon wanted to go there, but the Indian High Commission

did not permit, he said.

"Most of the people in Manipur are against the Tipai project as its implementation will dislodge a large number of indigenous people from their own lands while it would cause a disastrous situation in the region.

We need to join their voice at home and abroad.

"During the world climate conference on December 12, our prime minister should convey our concern over the Tipaimukh project to her Indian counterpart.

"We had done wrong in Chittagong Hill Tracts in the past. We are still suffering greatly for the Farakka project. If we fail to settle Tipai issue rightly there would be more critical things over the 54 common rivers in near future," Prof Muzaffer said.

Convener of Tipaimukh Bandh Protirodh Andolon, Sylhet, Bedananda Bhattacharya chaired the first session while joint convener Lokman Ahmed read out the convention declaration in the morning. Representatives from the 12 districts spoke, among others, at the session moderated by joint convener EU Shahidul Islam.

Water expert Dr Enam Ul Haque presented a documentary on the effects of dams and embankments worldwide.

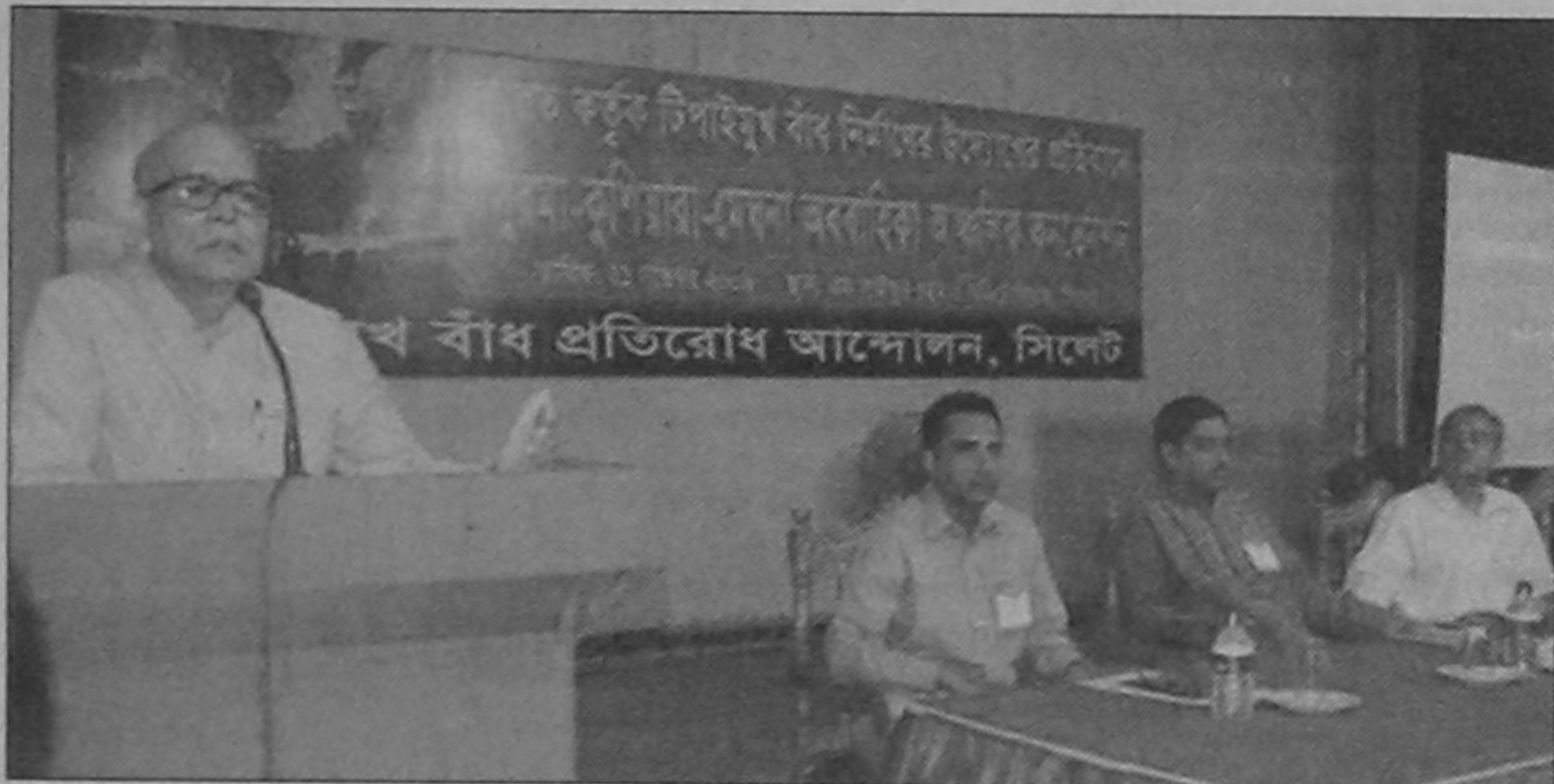


PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffer Ahmed addressing a regional convention organised by Tipai Bandh Protirodh Andolon at M Saifur Rahman Auditorium in Sylhet city yesterday to create awareness about the disastrous effects of Tipaimukh project in the Indian state of Manipur.

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