

TRAINING OF 'FAKE HEADMASTERS' IN RAJSHAHI

Callous act of officials gave way to the wrongdoing

Two employees go into hiding, another attached

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Three employees backed by a few of their bosses at Secondary Teachers Training Institute in Rajshahi were allegedly responsible for inclusion of the names of 56 'headmasters' of non-existent schools in the six-day training programme starting on May 22.

It is evident from gathered documents and interviews with persons concerned that the approved list of trainees, also comprising unemployed youths, students and traders, had 'escaped' scrutiny by the institute director and training coordinators.

Recommendations of district education offices under Rajshahi division were ignored while finalising list of participants in the six-day training under Teaching Quality Improvement Project.

The irregularities apparently aimed at embezzling nearly Tk 2 lakh that was to be distributed among the 56 fake participants (Tk 3,400 for each).

There were only 28 genuine participants in the training programme funded by Asian Development Bank and CIDA.

Of the three staff suspected for involvement in the misdeed, Jahangir Hossain, personal assistant to the institute director, and Abdul Hannan, an employee, went into hiding after the incident became known while Shafik Ahmed, audio-visual assistant of the institute, was attached to the office of the director, said institute officials.

Following instructions, the district education officers in



PHOTO: STAR

Some of the 56 fake headmasters, who had managed enrollment for a six-day training at the Secondary Teachers Training Institute in Rajshahi, show sign of despair after disclosure of their fraudulence on the fifth day of the training programme on Wednesday.

Rajshahi division sent names of schools under their jurisdiction for training of the headmasters, said Dr Swapan Kumar Dutta, director of the institute.

"But the 56 fake headmasters were not taken as per the recommendations. They managed enrolment by providing fake names of schools and submitting forged certificates of school managing committees," he said.

Under the supervision of the institute director, additional director Dr Selina Afroze, assistant directors M

Shamsuzzoha and Sirajum Munira coordinated the training and documents show that their signatures were put on the paper approving the list of 84 participants in the training programme, including 28 genuine and 56 fake ones.

The signatures of Dr Dutta were facsimile ones while the signatures of other officials were put with pens.

Asked about the matter, Dr Dutta said, "The perpetrators used my facsimile signature to get the names false trainees approved. I never use facsimile signature."

But he remained silent when asked why he prepared the facsimile signature if he never uses it.

Dutta and other officials said they assigned the three employees (later suspected for the wrongdoing) for registration of the participants.

Shafik Ahmed, one of the employees, told this correspondent, "I was asked to register the participants' names but no list of the recommendations of schools (provided by district education officers) was given to me for scrutinizing the partici-

pants. So I listed names of all who appeared before me claiming as headmasters."

Contacted by phone, Dr Selina Afroze denied her involvement in the irregularity. She gave an evasive reply when asked about her signature on the paper containing the list.

Sirajum Munira also declined to say anything regarding the matter.

However, M Shamsuzzoha told a group of reporters, "As a coordinator, it is my fault that I could not imagine that teachers can give false identity."

After collecting the list of fake headmasters, this correspondent contacted some of them over mobile phone and heard that they are unemployed people, students, traders, or staffs of private companies.

Many others could not be found through the cell phone numbers mentioned in the list.

Following directives from the education ministry, Prof Dr Shamsul Kalam Azad, the head of chemistry department of Rajshahi New Degree Government College, yesterday took charge as head of the three-member investigation committee, replacing training course coordinator Selina Afroze.

The committee, also comprising deputy director Ibrahim Ali and assistant director Izharul Islam, began their work yesterday.

They will investigate whether such irregularity was done during 35 other training programmes.



PHOTO: STAR

Repair work of Makarjano canal on Ghirish Chandra Road adjoining Bidyamoyee Government Girls School in Mymensingh town is going on at a snail's pace for the last one month, causing immense sufferings to people.



PHOTO: STAR

This primary school at Charpechakola in Bera upazila of Pabna district is on the brink of extinction as erosion by the Jamuna has taken a serious turn in the area.

Jamuna devours village, 12 shops in a day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The Jamuna devoured 12 shops at Kazirhat launch ghat under Bera upazila in the 24 hours until 9:00pm on Wednesday while a village in the upazila has been eroded by the river during the period, leaving at least 300 people homeless.

A primary school and a brick-built mosque in the affected Char Panchakola has been washed away by the erosion while houses, schools and mosques in Nagarbari, Raghunathpur, Protappur,

Gonpotdia and Char Panchakola areas of the upazila are still under erosion threat.

Workers of the Sirajganj division of Water Development Board (WDB) are dumping sand bags and logs in the eroded portions to protect the other areas from onslaught of the Jamuna.

Bera upazila Parishad Chairman Md Azizul Haque Arzu claimed that the Jamuna devoured around 300 acres of cultivable land and over 200 houses in Char Panchakola village in a week. The erosion-hit people have taken shelter at other villages of the upazila,

headed.

The erosion has taken a serious turn at Kazirhat point. At least 60 to 80 people have been shifted to Notakhola from Kazirhat launch ghat area.

Nagarbari port terminal is also under the threat of erosion as a big portion of Nagarbari-Notakhola road has gone into the river. Md Rafikul Islam, secretary of 'Nagarbari Port terminal Traders' Association, has urged the WDB officials to take immediate measures to protect over 350 fertiliser warehouses from erosion threat.

Another Shibir cadre arrested from RU

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested another alleged Shibir cadre from Rajshahi University (RU) campus yesterday in connection with February 9 violence on the campus.

Arrestee Firuz Hossain Mintu, 35, is a resident of Hetem Kha village adjacent to the university. Sources said, Chhatra League (BCL) activists of RU Madar Bux Hall and Suhrawardy Hall units caught Mintu on Madar Bux Hall premises at around 4:00pm and beat him up severely.

On information, a team from Motihar police station rushed to the hall and arrested the Shibir cadre.

BCL leaders alleged that Mintu is one of the top Shibir cadres who led Shibir gangs during attack on BCL men in Station Bazar area on February 9. BCL worker Faruque Hossain was killed during the violence on the day. They also alleged that Mintu entered campus for spying for the university unit Shibir men.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Motihar police station Abul Khair told this correspondent that they will take legal steps after primary interrogation.

Victims father also filed a case against Mubarak with Kaliganj Police Station the same day.

Police produced Mubarak in a Satkhira court that placed him on a three-day remand from May 8.

OC Farid Uddin said they have so far received six more allegations of raping girl children against Mubarak. The complainants are Ramesa Khatun, Mokhsed Ali, Sushani Mistri, Berek Gazi, Rashed Gazi and Sabina Pravin of Bondokati village.

They complainants demanded exemplary punishment to the culprit and five of them accused Mubarak of killing their children after rape, the OC said.

Horror tale of a 'child abuser'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Mubarak Ali Gazi, 45, of Bondokati village under Kaliganj upazila of Satkhira district confessed to killing five girl children after rape in the last 12 years.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Kaliganj Police Station Farid Uddin said Mubarak also confessed to raping 50 other girls at two villages--Bondokati and Ramnagar--in the upazila during the period.

Locals caught Mubarak on May 7 for violating a four-year-old girl at Bondokati village on the night of May 6 and handed him over to the police.

STORMS LASH FOUR DISTRICTS

8 missing as fishing trawler sinks, 350 houses damaged

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Storms sank a fishing trawler and destroyed at least 350 houses in four districts on Wednesday.

At least eight fishermen went missing as a fishing trawler sank in southern Bay near the coral island of St Martin's under Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar during a storm on Wednesday night.

The missing fishermen remained untraced till yesterday evening, reports a correspondent from Cox's Bazar.

Police and the fishermen who returned to shore said, FB Kala Miah owned by Nazrul Islam of Uttar Para in Shah Parir Dwip of Sabrang union in the upazila sank at around 10:00 pm after it was caught in a storm in the sea.

A nearby trawler rescued three floating fishermen Enayet Ullah, Noor Hossain and Shahabuddin.

The missing eight are serang of the trawler Abul Kasem, 55, Rahim Ullah, 30, Rahmat Ullah, 24, Md Kamal, 26, Abu Taher, 33, Fazal Karim, 27, Nur Hossain, 40 and Jalal Ahmed, 28. All of them hailed from Teknaf.

In Chandpur, at least 20 people were injured as a nor'wester lashed several villages in Uttar Matlab upazila early Wednesday.

The storm that lasted for about half an hour, hit Shatnol, Pachani, Sujatpur, Hanirpar, Ekhlaspur, Jorekhali, Bororchar, Pathan Bazaar, Ludhua, Amirabad, Naori, Nischintapur, Muktirandi, Aadurbhiti, Brahmaanchak, Chhengarchar Bazaar and the adjoining areas under the upazila, reports

UNB.

During the storm, over a hundred dwelling houses were razed to the ground. A large number of trees and electric poles were also uprooted snapping power supply to the affected villages.

Many schools, village markets and mosques were also affected by the storm.

Shatnol UP Chairman Goljar Alam told the news agency that in his union alone some 30 dwelling houses were damaged by the storm.

The affected people, most of them poor fishermen and

day-labourers, are now living under open sky with their family members.

Another report from Patuakhali adds: A young woman was injured in house collapse and over 200 thatched houses were damaged by a storm that lashed different areas of Mirzaganj and Galachipa upazilas Wednesday midnight.

Injured Nasima, 30, of Deuli-Subidkhalai union in Mirzaganj upazila was sent to a hospital in Barisal.

People of Char Kajol union of Galachipa upazila said six

shops were also damaged in the storm in their area.

In Narail, a storm lashed Mohishkhola and adjoining areas in the town destroying more than 50 houses on Wednesday night, reports a correspondent.

Locals said the storm which lasted for about two minutes caused extensive damage to crops and vegetables and uprooted a large number of trees.

The other worst hit areas are Bahir danga and Durgapur under Narail Pourashava.



PHOTO: STAR

A house at Mohishkhola village near Narail town lies mangled as a nor'wester lashed the area on Wednesday night, badly damaging over 50 houses.

Journos protest fellow's arrest on 'false' extortion charges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Journalists here have demanded release of a newsmen arrested allegedly on false extortion charges.

Police on Wednesday night arrested Arifur Rahman Arab, Bera upazila correspondent of the Daily Inqilab, also the editor of a local weekly 'A Juger Dip.'

Police said Abdul Hakim and Nurul Islam filed two separate cases with Bera police station against Arab. They arrested

the accused from his residence at Daspara of Bera municipality area a few hours after filing of the cases.

Arab was produced in Pabna court yesterday, officer-in-charge (OC) of Bera police station said.

Meanwhile, Pabna journalists including Bera press club and other places held separate programmes yesterday protesting the arrest of Arab.

Termining the cases as false and fabricated they demanded his immediate release. Pabna Reporters Unity brought out a

silent procession and held a protest rally in the district headquarters yesterday noon. Journalists from different newspapers and electronic media participated in the demonstration.

President of Pabna Reporters Unity Alhaz Raziur Rahman Rumi led the procession that paraded the main streets of the district town.

The journalists said Arab was arrested in false cases as he sent news items on crimes by a few local influential people and political leaders.