

Newsmen protest attack by religious bigots

Journalists across the country yesterday strongly protested the Friday's heinous attacks on newsmen by religious bigots and demanded immediate punishment to the perpetrators, reports our correspondent.

In Chittagong, journalists' leaders blamed Jamaat-Shibir and some like-minded radical Islamist parties for the Friday's attacks on journalists and Chittagong Press Club (CPC). They demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the attackers.

Due to practising journalism properly as well as covering news of 'mass upsurge' demanding capital punishment for the war criminals, Jamaat-Shibir men vandalised Chittagong Press Club (CPC) and swooped on journalists, they said.

The leaders were speaking at a protest rally jointly organised by CPC and Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) in front of the club at around 11:00am.

CPC President Ali Abbas said as the CPC members believe in the spirit of independence, the anti-liberation forces launched the attack on it. No attack on CPC has been made since the independence, said Shahidul Alam, President of CUJ.

Former CPC president Abu Sufian said fundamentalists are hatching conspiracy to thwart the ongoing trial of the war criminals and mass

upsurge of the new generation. He urged the journalists to stay united against all conspiracies. Mohsin Chowdhury, general secretary of CPC and Reaz Haider Chowdhury, general secretary of CUJ also spoke at the rally.

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, Sports Journalists' Association, TV Journalists' Association and Photo Journalists' Association expressed solidarity with the programme.

A group of fundamentalists attacked journalists, vandalised CPC and tore banners, posters and festoons at Gonojagoron Mancha in front of the club on Friday.

In Sylhet, journalists formed a human chain in the city's Zindabazar area yesterday noon to protest the attacks on the on-duty reporters and photographers during agitation by Jamaat and its sympathisers in the afternoon and by the BCL men in the evening on Friday.

The groups assaulted at least 10 journalists, set five motorbikes afire and damaged 10 cameras in the city. The journalists' leaders demanded legal measures against the attackers in three days.

Meanwhile, the Sylhet chapter of the 14-party alliance took out a procession in the city yesterday demanding legal actions against Jamaat-Shibir men and their sympathisers for vandalising Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar and other establishments.

They also held a rally in

the court Point area with City Mayor and City AL chef Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran in the chair. The speakers said they will resist today's hartal called by Jamaat and some like-minded radical Islamist parties.

Sylhet district and city units of BNP at a press conference yesterday condemned the Friday's attack on Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar. District BNP Vice-President and former lawmaker Dilder Hossain Selim also condemned the BCL attack on different business establishments and banks in the city the same day.

In Khulna, Jamaat-Shibir men have been declared persona non grata at Khulna Press Club.

Mogbul Hossain Mintu, president of Khulna Press Club and Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) announced this at a rally held on the club premises yesterday.

Khulna Press Club, Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ), Khulna Photo and TV Journalists Association jointly arranged the rally at around 11:30am protesting the Friday's attacks on Journalists across the country.

The speakers demanded immediate arrest of the culprits responsible for assaulting journalists, vandalising Chittagong Press Club and Shaheed Minars in Feni and Sylhet and torching the national flag in Chandpur and Bogra on Friday.

Journalists later brought out a procession that paraded different streets in the city.

In Jhenidah, local journalists brought out a procession and formed a human chain in the yesterday protesting assault on the journalists by Jamaat-Shibir men on Friday.

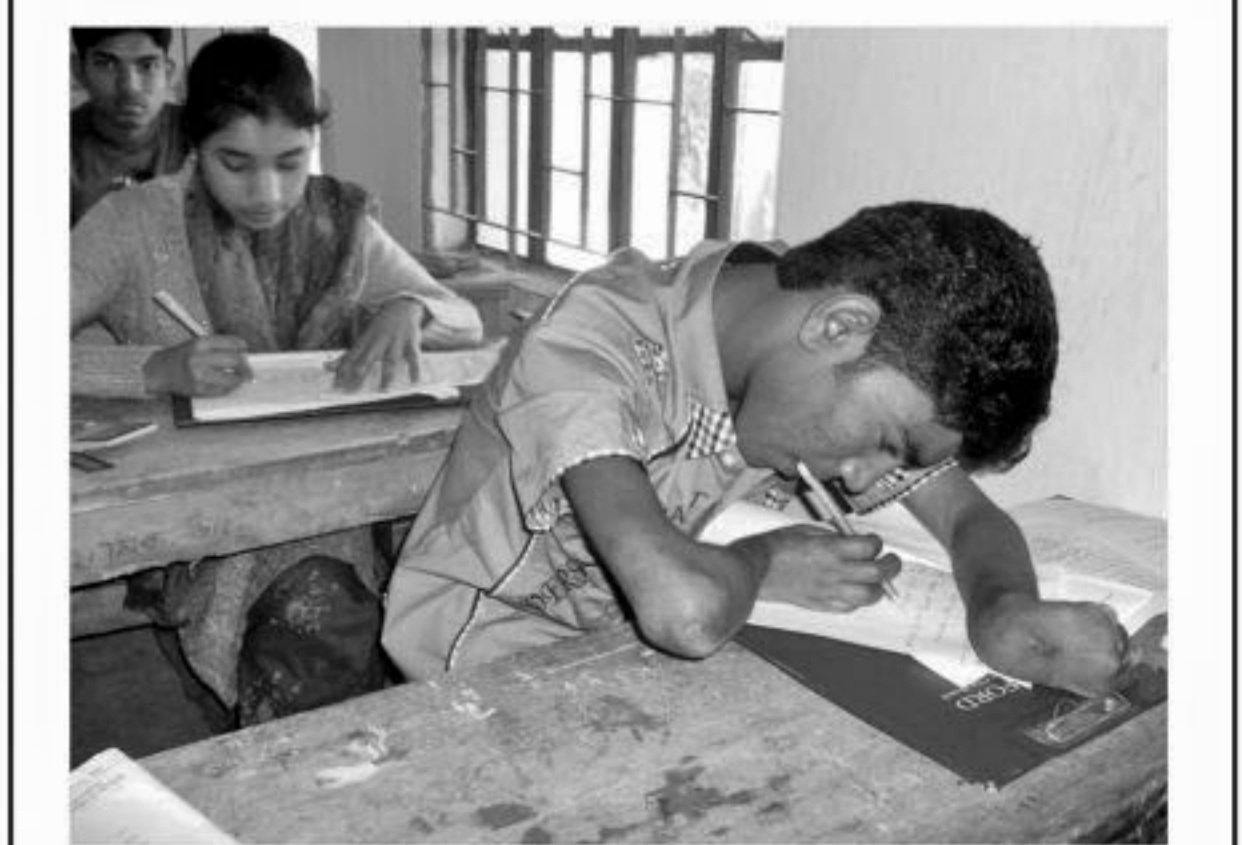
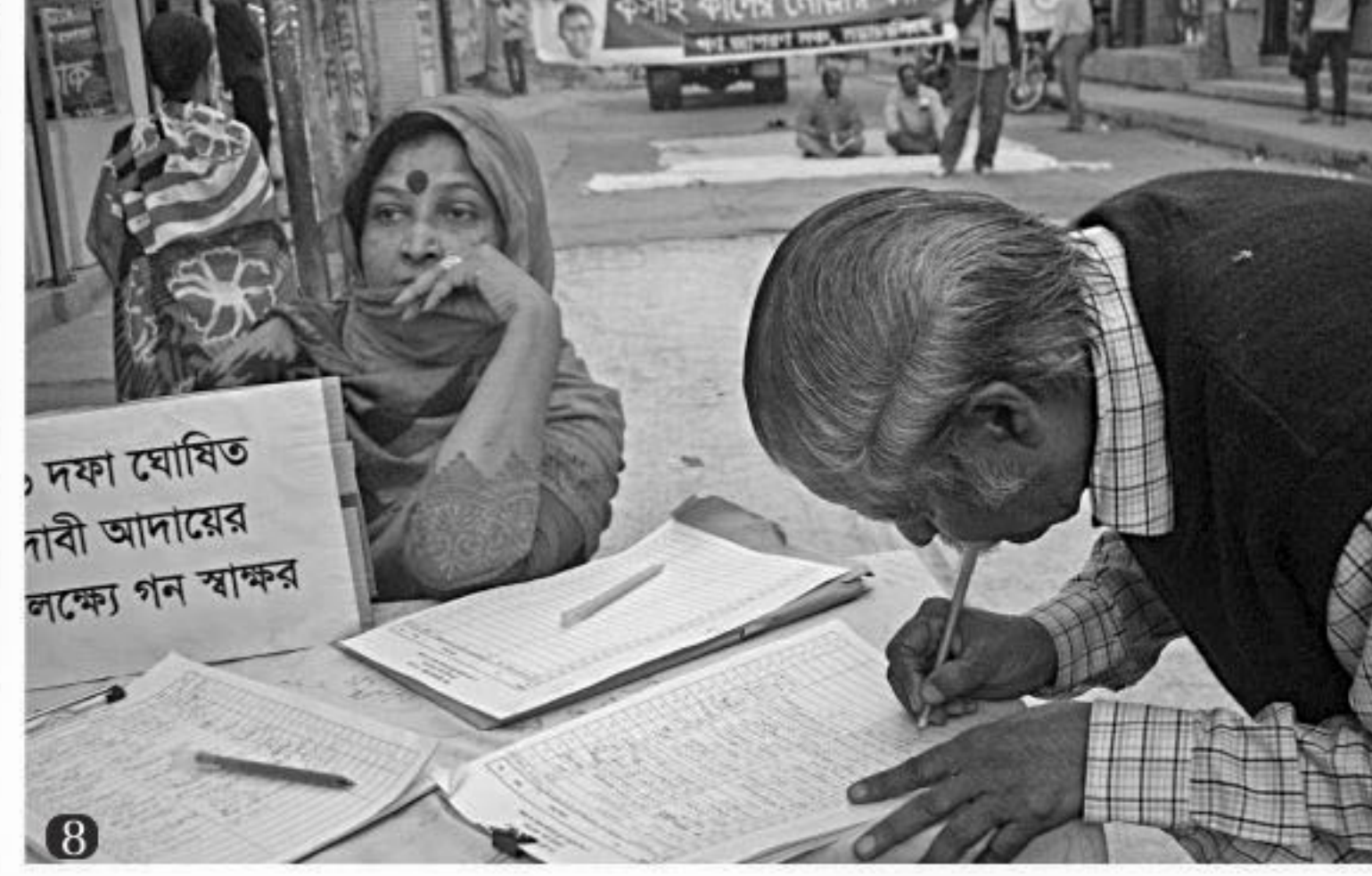
They demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits responsible for attack on journalists, vandalising Chittagong Press Club and Shaheed Minars in Feni and Sylhet and torching the national flag in Chandpur and Bogra.

Similar programmes were held in other districts across the country.

PROTESTERS RETURN AS ZEALOTS GO VIOLENT



Journalists, teachers, students, freedom fighters and cultural activists stage demonstrations across the country yesterday demanding exemplary punishment to Jamaat-Shibir men and the activists of some like-minded radical Islamist parties, who attacked journalists, vandalised Chittagong Press Club and Shaheed Minars in Feni and Sylhet and torched the national flag in Chandpur and Bogra on Friday. Photos show 1) photojournalists hold a protest rally, keeping their cameras on a road in Bogra town, 2) journalists form a human chain in front of Rangpur Press Club, 3) journalists stage a sit-in on the premises of Munshiganj Central Shaheed Minar, 4) school students take out a procession at Bhuapur in Tangail, 5) teachers of Rajshahi University join a human chain on the campus, 6) Freedom fighters and cultural activists bring out a procession in Faridpur town demanding death penalty to war criminals, 7) students of Khagrachhari Government College demonstrate in the town demanding death sentences to war criminals, including Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah, and 8) a man at Durgabari Road in Mymensingh town puts his signature on a paper, expressing solidarity with the six-point demand announced from Projoonmo Chattar at Shahbagh in the capital.



Against all odds, he goes ahead

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Ferdous Alam Firoz, a physically challenged by birth, writes the answer scripts in the ongoing SSC examinations, holding the pen with his mouth.

Firoz, 16, son of Shahabuddin Ahmed and Firoza Begum of Sreerampur village in Patgram upazila, is appearing at the examination as a humanities student of Aftab Uddin Prodhan High School at the same village.

His examination centre is Huzur Uddin Government Girls' High School at Patgram upazila town. "I can't do any work with my hands as they are insensitive since my birth. However, the thumb of my right hand is a little active and I write with the help of my mouth using the thumb as support to run the pen," said Firoz.

"I am habituated to writing in this way since my childhood. For this, my handwriting is a bit slower," he said.

His father Shahabuddin Ahmed, a low paid employee at Sreerampur union parishd office, said, "I have to maintain the family with a small income. We could never arrange private tutor for Firoz. He reads alone, and teaches his younger brother and sisters, and sometimes neighbours."

His mother Firoza Begum said, "As Firoz's hands are inactive, I help him to take meal, bathe and wear dresses. Sometimes he gets help from his younger brother."

Firoz's classmate Aminul Islam said Firoz did good results in all the school examinations and helped weak students in the class.

Firoz's schoolteacher Akteruzzaman Miah said, "Firoz was attentive in classes and remained within fifth position from classes six to ten. He is dear to the teachers and students of the school. We hope he will do brilliant result in the SSC examinations."

"Despite his physical challenge, Firoz writes well in the answer scripts although he is a bit slow. He is always seen normal and smiling in the examination hall," said Shamsul Islam, an invigilator at the examination centre of Patgram Huzur Uddin Government Girls' High School. Firoz wants to get higher education but he needs financial support for the purpose.

Man killed as villagers clash in C'nawabganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A man was killed and three others were injured in a clash over a trivial matter at Baliadighi village in Shibganj upazila on Friday.

The deceased was identified as Enamul Haque, 50, son of Abdil Hossain of the village.

The injured, Shariful Islam, Jalal Uddin and Rawful Begum of the area, were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital.

Zamir Uddin, officer in-charge at Shibganj police station, said a goat of Enamul damaged the plants of a wheat field owned by one Jumrat Ali of the village on Thursday.

The supporters of Jumrat attacked Enamul with sharp weapons, leaving him dead on the spot following an altercation over the issue on Friday evening.

Three others were injured by the attackers when they tried to save Enamul.

Mindless sand lifting from Kushiyyara continues unabated

UNB, Sylhet

A section of influential people is making a fast buck by lifting sand through dredgers illegally from the Kushiyyara River at Sherpur on Sylhet-Moulvibazar border.

Due to the unauthorised extraction of sand, erosion on both sides of the river has intensified.

Protesting the mindless sand lifting, local people have submitted a petition to the Sylhet divisional commissioner recently, but to no effect yet.

The unscrupulous section of people has been continuing sand extraction from the river through dredgers illegally for the last 8-10 months, locals said.

Every day, sand is lifted by 15-20 dredgers from 15 kilometres area from

Kushiyyara Bazar to Paharpur of Balaganj upazila.

The sand is then piled up in an area of five acres at Brahmangram in Sherpur Bazar on the riverbank.

From there, the traders supply the sand to different areas of the district by trucks.

The practice is going on under the nose of the local administration, but the officials seem indifferent to the issue.

On the midnight of January 16, Awami League (AL) leaders Syed Abdul Basid, Limon Mia, Abdul Ali, Omar Ali, Nazrul Islam and Helal Member under the leadership of Osmaninagar AL president Kabir Uddin Ahmed allegedly lifted sand from the river point through five dredgers

engaging more than 100 workers.

Requesting immediate steps to stop the illegal sand lifting, a letter signed by more than 50 local residents was later sent to Sylhet divisional commissioner, the shipping ministry, Moulvibazar deputy commissioner, upazila land officer and the UNO.

Due to the sand extraction, the government is being deprived of revenue income of lakhs of taka on the one hand and about 400 families are in fear of losing their homesteads on the other hand.

Sadipur union chairman Abdur Rab said the sand lifters are very powerful. They are continuing the sand lifting evading lakhs of taka tax and planning to evict the local people from the riverbank, he added.

Mystery shrouds death of businessman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Mystery shrouded the death of an elderly businessman at Dangarpara village under Badarganj upazila yesterday.

The hanging body of Goura Chandra Mallik, 60, was recovered from his under-construction house at Palpara area in the city.

Police and locals said Goura was living at a rented house along with his family members in Molatol area of the city.

A few days ago he started construction of his

house in Palpara area and engaged a man as night guard at the site.

On Friday night, Goura stayed at the under-construction building as Friday was the weekly holiday of the night guard.

But yesterday morning, locals found his body hanging from a beam of the building and informed the police.

Jhunu Mallik, brother of the deceased, claimed that Goura had no enmity with any person.

"I don't understand the reason behind the killing," he said.

30 BNP men injured in clash with police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 30 BNP activists were injured, five of them bullet-hit, in a clash with the law enforcers in the district town yesterday.

Police fired 50 rubber bullets and 10 tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

Police said district unit

BNP brought out a procession in support of today's hartal in the town.

As the procession reached Masjid Market intersection, the BNP men hurled brick bats at the law enforcers. In retaliation, police fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets.

The BNP men also vandalised and torched two vehicles during the procession.