

Natore Jamaat men clash with cops

5 policemen among 20 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

At least 20 people, including five cops, were injured as Jamaat-Shibir men clashed with police in Natore district town yesterday morning.

As part of their previously announced programme, Jamaat-Shibir yesterday brought out processions in different districts, protesting the government's "conspiracy" to hang Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami and its Nayebe-Ameer Delawar Hossain Sayedee on charges of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

Nahid Hossain, superintendent of Natore police, said Jamaat-Shibir activists brought out a procession in Harishpur bypass area around 8:30am and tried to enter the district town.

Chased by police in front of Sher-e-Bangla High School, they hurled brick chips at the law enforcers and a clash ensued.

Police fired bullets and teargas shells to bring the situation under control.

Four Jamaat-Shibir men were picked up from the spot, Nahid said.

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A physically challenged man seeking alms on Airport Road in Banani squeezing himself between two vehicles stopping at a set of lights. He is apparently ignoring the risk of being run over when the lights go green.

PHOTO: STAR

ETV sues

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Gen Zakir Hasan and four interns -- Shaheen, Shaon, Shoaib and Naim, were made accused in the case.

Smashing the cameras of the newsmen, snatching their mobile phones and money and issuing death threats to them were the other allegations mentioned in the case.

Hearing the petition yesterday, Metropolitan Magistrate Keshob Roy Chowdhury asked the DB police to submit a probe report before it by May 11.

During Saturday's incident at the hospital, interns also confined the journalists to the director's room for several hours.

Julhas Kabir, a reporter of ETV, alleged that the unruly interns did not spare them when they tried to take shelter in a police van.

Even the hospital director took away a mobile phone of his colleague Nurun Nabi and smashed it, he claimed.

Talking to The Daily Star on Saturday, Zakir Hasan said the interns had attacked the journalists for filming and interviewing patients without obtaining any permission from the authorities.

Ruling out that the victims were confined to his room, he said, he had rather saved the newsmen from the attackers.

Asked about the allegation that he had smashed a reporter's mobile phone, he said, "Come to my office tomorrow [Sunday]; we will talk about it."

Traumatised, left mostly

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long: the haunted memories severely encumber their performance.

Unfortunately, the issue, which, psychiatrists say, can rouse suicidal tendencies, never got any attention from the government. While some international donors and nongovernmental organisations came forward to provide psychological support, the operations petered out after some time.

For instance, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), with support from World Health Organisation, provided psychological first-aid, counselling and medicine to around 4,000 survivors after the collapse, but the operation ended on November 30 last year in the absence of funds, according to NIMH Director Dr Waziul Alam Chowdhury.

Financial support and physical treatment for the injured got all the attention in the past one year, but psychiatric treatment is no less vital, he said, citing the suicide of Salma Akhter, an injured worker, in January.

"It is necessary to continue follow-up support to help the traumatised survivors recover. The sad incidents like suicide might not happen and

many could recover from deep depression if we could properly see through the treatments."

Dr Solaiman Hossain Mehedi, registrar of Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed, reiterated the same. "But I have not seen any initiative from the government to support the traumatised workers."

"In my dreams, I still see my dead floor in-charge coming to me laughing. I want to get rid of this. I am scared to live alone in the dark," said Nilufa Begum, who saw nearly a dozen of her colleagues die in front of her eyes following the collapse of the eight-storey building.

She got five days of counselling from psychiatrists when she was in the hospital getting treatment on her paralysed leg, but it was not enough.

"It relieved me a great deal from trauma. I really felt good after that. But it was not adequate," said the 35-year old, who also suffers from splitting headache.

For want of professional facilitation, many of the traumatised workers have turned to local charlatans or witch doctors to snap them out of their ordeal.

Take, Zohra Akter Mili, a 22-year-old survivor of Rana Plaza, who is now relying on an amulet procured from a

witch doctor to help her move on with her life. She acts hysterically whenever memories of her missing husband flash back.

Dr Abdul Kaseem Md Khaleequzzaman, senior assistant registrar of NIMH, said there are over 100 deeply traumatised Rana Plaza workers who need to be admitted for psychological treatment.

"But these patients are not coming to the institute, although we are ready."

Contacted, MM Neazuddin, secretary of Health and Family Welfare ministry, said there is an instruction to specialised hospitals to provide treatment to the affected workers of Rana Plaza.

He said it is difficult for the government to know who are traumatised and who are not. "How can we know unless they come to us?"

Neazuddin's point can best be illustrated by Zulekha, who is scared to seek treatment for her mental health lest it requires more money, which she can ill afford.

Her family is under severe financial stress due to her condition, which also includes severe headache and breast infection. She has resigned to a life like this, if it secures the livelihood and education of her two daughters.

Good job done

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report "Governance Challenges in the Ready-made Garments Sector: Pledges and Progress" at a press conference in the city's Abakash Hotel.

The report assessed the country's progress in improving labour standards and working conditions since the garment industry saw its worst disaster on April 24 last year.

The latest report is a follow-up on a TIB assessment in October last year.

In the previous assessment, the TIB identified 63 areas of governance challenges that Bangladesh needed to overcome to ensure a better workplace for more than four million garment workers.

Of the 102 initiatives by the government, factory owners and other stakeholders, 31 percent has been implemented and 60 percent is in process.

The report praised the government for turning the factory inspection directorate into a full-fledged department, amending labour laws, formulating occupational and health policy, allowing trade unions, appointing more inspectors and raising minimum wages.

It also pointed out some challenges, and said there might be irregularities in the registration of trade unions.

The TIB called for ensuring transparency in compensating the injured

and the families of dead workers from government fund.

"Many individuals and companies have donated money to the fund. The government should publish updated information on the fund at least once a month," said Iftekharuzzaman.

A major challenge is the lack of coordination among all stakeholders. Another disappointment is the delay in resolving cases filed against the owners of Tazreen Fashions and Rana Plaza, the TIB said.

The organisation reiterated its call for a separate ministry for the garment sector, saying 17 ministries and departments are involved with the key industry but they lack coordination.

It suggested that the government establish a Garments Sector Governance Authority until the ministry is set up.

The TIB said there has been no visible progress in shifting garment factories from the capital to the proposed apparel village in Munshiganj.

Besides, the pace of factory inspection by buyers and the government is slow, and in some cases, the inspection lacked desired level of transparency, said the TIB.

Governance challenges are multi-dimensional, and collusive corruption has been pervasive in the sector, Iftekharuzzaman said.

"All stakeholders have shown commitment to face those head-on."

Corruption has crept into the sector over the last 30 years and it would not go in just a year or two, he said.

TIB Chairperson Sultana Kamal said these positive initiatives have only laid the necessary foundations which are far from sufficient to bring about a sustainable change.

"The process for a positive change has begun. But there are still concerns in some fundamental areas."

The TIB pointed to the delay in bringing to justice those responsible for tragedies in the sector.

"If the people responsible for the Rana Plaza disaster are not brought to book, the whole achievement would fall apart and the progresses achieved so far will go in vain," said Iftekharuzzaman.

Referring to some buyers' withdrawal of orders from Bangladesh, the TIB reminded international buyers and companies of their responsibility.

On the basis of newspaper reports, it said about 25 factories were shut down over the last one year, leaving 50,000 workers jobless.

"We can see a deficiency of accountability among buyers. If this trend continues and buyers fail to act responsibly, thousands more will lose jobs," said Iftekharuzzaman.

India's Hero to set up

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Currently, assemblers and manufacturers together sell 3 lakh to 3.5 lakh units of motorcycle a year, according to industry insiders.

The Indian Bajaj brand, with its 45-49 percent share, is the market leader. Walton, Runner, TVS and Yamaha are the other leading brands.

Hero, after separating from Honda in 2011, has augmented its global presence and now sells across 18 countries.

Last year, the company announced plans to enter 50 new markets by 2020 with a target to set up 20 manufacturing facilities across the globe.

Currently, Hero, which holds more than 50 percent market share in the two-wheeler segment in India, has three manufacturing plants in the country, with plans to build another two in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

The company sold a record 6.25 million units of two-wheeler last

BY THE NUMBERS

\$40m to be invested in 5 years

Production capacity to be 1.5 lakh units a year

Hero will have a 55% stake in the JV, Nitel Niloy Group the rest

Aims to grab a 20% market share in one year of operation

financial year and aims to increase its annual bike and scooter sales to 12 million units by 2020.

Hero held a press conference at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in Dhaka to announce the joint venture deal.

"The aim of the joint venture is to provide technologically advanced,

innovative and fuel efficient two-wheelers for customers in Bangladesh," said Abdul Matlub Ahmad, chairman of Nitel Niloy Group.

Hero has already started selling a range of motorcycles in Bangladesh through 50 outlets and opened its first 'signature showroom' in Dhaka yesterday.

At the press conference, Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu said the government is working to promote 'made in Bangladesh' vehicles.

"We will provide all sort of support if any company wants to produce motorcycles, cars, buses and trucks locally."

Such a joint venture initiative will help build a vibrant manufacturing base in the country as a lot of ancillary industries will spring up targeting the motorbike industry, said Sandeep Chakravorty, acting Indian high commissioner in Dhaka.

BJP politician comes

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be aimed at polarising voters.

The Indian Express says the remark is a "deliberate message" and has clear "Hindu nationalist overtones".

"Singh's words cannot be unsaid easily, and the fears they create will not end when election results are declared; they linger like a malevolent fog," the paper adds.

Hindi newspaper the Dainik Jagran says such comments are likely to harm the BJP, which is facing criticism from other parties for "polarising voters".

Meanwhile, the Jharkhand police have filed a case against Singh over his statement, reports say.

Singh's remark is the latest in a series of controversial comments made by politicians during their campaigns for the ongoing general elections.

The nine-phase vote began on April 7 and will conclude on May 12. Votes will be counted on May 16.

CAMPAIGN SONG

Meanwhile, the BJP has "quietly dropped" its main campaign song which was being aired repeatedly on several TV and radio stations, The Times of India reports.

The song shows Modi taking a pledge that he would save India from destruction.

"The anthem's lines spoken by Modi -- Main desh nahin jhukne dunga ... main desh nahin mitne dunga (I will not let the nation bow down/be rubbed out) -- are seen as needlessly dire and apocalyptic," the paper adds.

And finally, surrogate parents from across the country on Sunday organised an "awareness walk" in Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, The Times of India reports.

"Surrogate mothers...walked alongside genetic parents and their children", the paper says.

WEALTH REPORT

ACC presses charges against Izhar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday pressed charges against Hefajate-e-Islam nayebe-ameer Mufti Izharul Islam Chowdhury in a case filed for not submitting his wealth statement before the anti-graft body.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director HM Akhtaruzzaman submitted the charge sheet of the case before the court of Chittagong Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Moshirur Rahman Chowdhury, said advocate Mahmudul Haque Mahmud, lawyer for the ACC.

On September 17 last year, Sirajul Haque, divisional deputy assistant director of ACC-1, filed the case against Izharul, also president of Nezame Islam

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Oxford English

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because the third edition of the famous dictionary, estimated to fill 40 volumes, is running at least 20 years behind schedule.

Michael Proffitt, the first new chief editor of Oxford English Dictionary (OED) for 20 years, said the mammoth masterpiece is facing delays because "information overload" from the internet is slowing his compilers.

His team of 70 philologists, including lexicographers, etymologists and pronunciation experts, has been working on the latest version, known as OED3, for the past 20 years.

Proffitt revealed to Country Life magazine that the next edition will not be completed until 2034, and likely only to be offered in an online form because of its gargantuan size.

20kg gold seized

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director of customs intelligence, told The Daily Star that the arrested passengers arrived in Dhaka on a Singapore Airlines flight from Singapore around 11:25pm.

On suspicion, customs officials searched them and found the gold bars in their bodies.

The customs officials arrested Mobarak for trying to help the passengers escape.