

Rajshahi University Central Students Union: Past and present

Our RU Correspondent

THE Rajshahi University Central Students Union (RUCSU) is the apex body of the students of Rajshahi University. All bona fide students of this university are its members. The RUCSU works through the directly elected student representatives and it operates in the general interest of students irrespective of casts, creed or political affiliation of the students. The RUCSU is a statutory body in the sense that it is explicitly recognized by the Rajshahi University Act, 1973. It is, therefore, natural that the RUCSU enjoys an enviable position in the university community.

In recent years, however, there has been considerable decline in its significance. It is now a body shown off the halo of glory which used to surround it in the past the RUCSU has been reduced to such lack luster condition since the university has suspended all its (RUCSU) activities a few years ago. Notwithstanding this, it is general feeling that, no description of the fascinating history of Rajshahi University will be adequate without any present of RUCSU.

The present write-up has been designed to keep this view in mind.

The origin, aims objectives structure of RUCSU

The famous enactment of the Rajshahi University Bill in the East Bengal Provincial Assembly took place on 31 March 1953, but the main function of the university i.e. teaching began with the starting of Masters previous year class in the academic session 1954.

55. Among the students admitted that year many were politically conscious and some of them were veterans student leaders who took active part in the language move-

ment and in the Rajshahi University movement when they were college students. There students realized the need of a union in the university students soon after their admission in the university. They prepared a charter of their various demands and placed it before the university authority. In that charter the demand for a union was given the pride of place. At that time the Vice-Chancellor was the personification of the university authority, he did not readily agree to the demand of the students nor did he turned down the demand into the adopted what might be called a temporizing policy irrespective of the matter. This attitude of the Vice-Chancellor provided the students pertinent cause to give call for strike. The news of strike for the cause of union was properly flashed in various dailies and it created public opinion in favour of the students cause, constrained by various such circumstances the university authority then formed a 15-member committee with M.Z. Islam (then inspector of colleges of Rajshahi University) as its convener, to form a constitution for the proposed union. Some students were included in that committee among them mention must be made of late Molisin Pramanik, Abdur Razzaque Khan, L.R. Mallick and Moniruzzaman Mia because they always kept the interest in the affairs of Rajshahi University and always tried their best for the progress and prosperity of the university.

The Rajshahi University students' Union RUSU (not RUCSU) was formed this way. Two elections of the office bearers of RUSU were held in the year 1956, 57 and 1957-58 respectively. The former was however very short

lived body. The promulgation of Martial Law and abrogation of the constitution by Field Marshal Ayub Khan, in October, 1958 put strict ban on all sorts of democratic and congregational activities (Union activities) throughout the nook and corner of the country. Along with many other democratic bodies and institutions RUSU met an abrupt end of its life.

The second phase of the RUCSU the whole of Pakistan was under unbridled Martial Law from October 1958 to May 1962, in June 1962 field lifted Martial Law and gave the country a constitution of his own living and own design. Restriction on political activities were gradually being relaxed. Party politics was allowed. During 1958-62, noticeable changes also took place in the mental make up and desires and aspirations of the people. Disenchantment will the belief in the superiority of Martial Law, increasing urge of mind for democratic form of government and regard for democratic values institutions all these phenomena prepared the ground for carrying out movement of ideological reformation within next few years. It was during this period of great intellectual awakening that the interest of the university students union was launched a new with increased enthusiasm and vigour. By 1962-63 certain changes were brought about in the academic programmes and infrastructural facilities of the university. Three years Honours course was introduced in the academic year 1962-65, and again a few halls of residence for the university students were set up on the university's own campus at

the university's own campus at Moiher. The students felt that they must be unions of the students. In the inter-university competi-

tions and conferences etc. In short, the RUCSU was formed with the grand idea that it would conceive, be meant for resident students and attached students of the hall and the central union for the students of the university central students and extra curricular activities of the university students and would make necessary arrangements for the realization and implementation of those programme. For checking conduct of the affairs of the union i.e. for its administration. There is a 15 member executive committee. The Vice-Chancellor of the university shall be ex-officio president

student leader of that time Rustam Ali, Bayazid Ahmed, Serajul Islam, Mahbubul Huq, Zakaria Ahmed, Sarder Anzad Hussain were included in the constitution making body. The RUCSU came into being under resolution No. 6 of the Rajshahi University syndicate meeting held on 15 December. **Aims and Objective:**

The aims and objectives of the RUCSU were stated as follows:

- (1) To promote corporate life amongst the students for preparing them for tune citizenship and to create leadership among them, (ii) To foster fellow feeling, mutual understanding and amity among the students of the university, (iii) To stimulate interest in the students for developing the faculty of speaking; debating, lighting etc, and for these purpose to be active.

The RUCSU was founded in the year of 1962-63. Since then and upto the academic year 1989 to 1990 RUCSU elections were held 15 times in all. For many reasons such as detentions, troubles and unrest in the country or on the university campus, countrywide movements of various kinds liberation war, suspension of union activities by the military government, devastating natural calamities like floods and cyclones for all these reasons RUCSU elections could not be held in the year of 1970-72, 75-80 and during most part of 1980's. More than a decade has passed since the last election

was held in the year of 1989-90. The reasons are not definitely the ones as mentioned above installation ceremony of the RUCSU office-bearers was one of the most impatient and gala functions of the RUCSU. If was the ceremonial function through which the elected office-bearers were sworn into this when the students of the country were expelled, cases were also filed against many students. In the 1968-70 countrywide movement when the students of the country formed Students Action Committee (SAC) on January 5 in 1969, the RUCSU and other leaders formed a branch of the actors committee in the Rajshahi University.

It is to be noted that this committee played heroic role in 1969 independence of Bangladesh and after 1975 the RUCSU leaders took active part in the movement for the restoration of democratic practices in the university. The contribution of Bazlu Rahman Chhana Badsha, Jahangi Kabir Rana, Shahjahan Seaj Ruhul Kabir Reji and many others shall remain fresh in our memory for many year to come.

Many of the RUCSU office-bearers rose to very important position in life. Moniruzzaman Mia, first VP of RUCSU became the Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, Abdur Rahman, Sardar Anjed Hossain and Abdur Rouf were elected representatives in national assembly. Fazlur Rahman Patal, Sardar Anjed Hossain were ministers during BNP and Ershad regimes, Fazle Hossain Badsha is now an established political leader in the country. All of them had their first training in politics as RUCSU office-bearers. They did splendid jobs while in the RUCSU and these like floods and cyclones for all these reasons RUCSU elections could not be held in the year of February, 1963. The RU student leaders and RUCSU leaders took bold steps to postpone a convoca-