

# 'RU authorities' pro-Shibir stance triggers protests

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Progressive Teachers Society (PTS) at Rajshahi University and students and cultural organisations yesterday protested the university authorities' decision allowing Islami Chhatra Shibir to hold cultural functions on the campus canceling the earlier given permission to Sammilita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) to hold programmes on December 16 and 17, marking the Victory Day.

The RU unit of SSJ had scheduled cultural functions on the premises of martyred Memorial Archive on December 16 and 17 after taking permission from director of the Teachers Students Cultural Centre (TSCC) on December 10.

On December 15, TSCC authorities sent a letter to SSJ president stating that Bikalpa Sangskritik Sangstha (BSS), a cultural organisation of Islamic Chhatra Shibir, could hold functions at the venue on December 16 and 17.

On December 16, at about noon, Shibir-backed cultural organisation Bikalpa Sangskritik Sangstha occupied the venue and set up a podium and took away loudspeakers erected by SSJ. They later instructed SSJ activists when they tried to go to the venue for their cultural programme.

The PTS in a statement yesterday protested the RU authorities' decision to allow Shibir to hold cultural functions on the campus.

and other progressive organisations from holding cultural programmes on the campus for several years and patronising Shibir and Jamaat-e-Islami.

This vitiates academic atmosphere on the campus, they said and called upon the university administration to play a neutral role.

The statement was signed by PTS convener Prof. Abdus Sobhar, Prof. Mizan Uddin, Prof. Mokhlesur Rahman, Prof. Bidhan Chandra Das, Prof. Ananda Kumar Saha, Prof. Shamsuddin Ilias and Prof. AHA Zihadul Karim.

The Rajshahi University unit of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday staged separate demonstrations on the campus protesting the Shibir vandalism and foiling of scheduled cultural programmes of SSJ Sunday evening.

The SSJ took out a procession on the campus and paraded different streets protesting the Shibir vandalism allegedly under the RU authorities' patronisation.

At the rally held in front of the Central Library, speakers said Shibir wants to ban all progressive cultural activities on the campus and demanded immediate removal of TSCC Director Abdur Rahman Siddiqi.

They also threatened to launch a tougher agitation together with other progressive student organisations against the TSCC director if he is not removed.

BCL also held a rally protesting Sunday's incident and called upon the RU authorities to stop 'Shibir terrorism' on the campus.

They also demanded punishment to the persons responsible for Sunday's incident. The rally was addressed by BCL RU general secretary Ayeen Uddin and other party leaders.

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, RU Drama Group, Udichi, Gonoshilpi Sangstha and other cultural organisations in statements also condemned Shibir for Sunday's incident.