

# 'RU authorities' pro-Shibir stance triggers protests

BU 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 Sammilito Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) to hold programmes on December 16 and 7, 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 Sangha (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 Sangha occupied the venue and the podium and took away loud speakers erected by SSJ. They later instructed SSJ activists when they had to go the venue for their cultural programme.

The PTS in a statement yesterday protested the RU authorities

and other progressive organisations from holding cultural programmes on the campus for a 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 Sobhan, Prof Mizan Uddin, Prof Mokhlesu Rahman, Prof Bidhan Chandra Das, Prof Ananda Kumar Saha, Prof Shamsuddin Alias and Prof AHN Zihadul Karim.

The Rajshahi University unit of Sammilito 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 Siddiqui. 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.

Samajtrantrik Chhatra Front, RU Drama Group, Udichi, Gonoshilpi Sangstha and other cultural organisations in statements also condemned Shibir for Sunday's inci-