

MP's reception sees Biral high schools closed for a day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

High schools and madrasas in Dinajpur's Biral were closed yesterday as an official of the upazila secondary education office asked teachers and students to be present at a reception programme for a local Awami League lawmaker.

Authorities of Biral Degree College organised the programme at the college to hail the lawmaker, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, for his contribution in getting the college nationalised in July this year.

The four-hour-long celebrations began around 10:00am. Abdullah Al Khairum, Biral upazila nirbahi officer, was also present.

There are eight colleges, 42 high schools, five junior schools and 16 madrasas in the upazila. Students and teachers of most of the educational institutions gathered at Biral Degree College with banners welcoming the lawmaker before the programme started on the instruction of a staff of the upazila secondary education office.

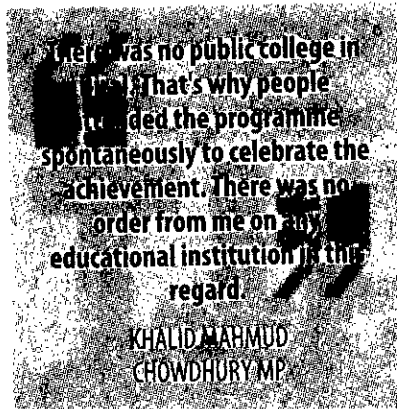
Talking to The Daily Star, some teachers, wishing not to be named, said they went to the college as they were asked by the education office staff, Moksed Ali.

Moksed phoned the headmasters of

most of the schools and asked them to be at the programme along with their students and teachers.

The teachers were also asked to come to the college with banners. Moksed even instructed them from where they need to print their banners.

The teachers printed the banners



from the shop of Mostafizur Rahman Babu, organising secretary of Biral upazila AL, as per the instruction. He runs a digital banner printing shop at Paharpur in Dinajpur town.

Each banner cost the teachers Tk 500. The rate is much lower at other shops, they alleged.

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Banners of different educational institutions were hung all over the college.

Contacted, Moksed said his superiors told him to communicate with the headmasters.

While visiting different schools, this correspondent found many of them closed.

"It's a kind of harassment. Think about the students who came from distant areas," said a student of Biral Pilot Girl's High School, seeking anonymity.

The Daily Star tried to contact Julfiqar Ali Shah, Biral upazila secondary education officer, for his comments, but he did not receive the phone call.

Arif Iqbal, assistant secondary education officer, denied the allegation of inviting any educational institutions to the programme.

Asked, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, an organising secretary of AL, told The Daily Star that students, teachers and people from different professions joined the programme spontaneously as they wanted to thank Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for nationalising the college.

"There was no public college in Biral. That's why people attended the programme willingly to celebrate the achievement. There was no order from me on any educational institution in this regard," he added.