



**Attacks on a procession of the Progotishil Chattra Jote of Jagannath University, Dhaka  
allegedly by Chattra League activists**

Fact finding Report

Odhikar

On 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2012 according to a pre-planned programme, Progotishil Chattra Jote commenced a protest march in the campus of Jagannath University, Dhaka to reduce the elevated undergraduate admission fee for the 2011-2012 session. The activists of Chattra League with the support of the University Authority attacked the procession in front of police. It was alleged that 15 students of Progotishil Chattra Jote were injured in the incident.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the incident. During the fact-finding mission, it interviewed:

- Injured Students
- Activist of Chattra League
- Jagannath University Authority
- Officials of law enforcing agency



Picture: 1 and 2 Injured students 3. Procession of the students and 4. Police was preventing the procession.

**Shariful Islam Chowdhury (Injured student), President, Samajtantrik Chattra Front, Jagannath University branch, Dhaka**

Shariful Islam Chowdhury told Odhikar that, the Jagannath University Authority had taken undergraduate level admission fees with an additional 5,000 Tk. for ‘campus development’ purposes for the 2011-12 session, which abused section 27/3<sup>1</sup> of the Jagannath University Act, 2005. The Progotishil Chattra Jote had carried out a protest march against this extra pay. According to a pre-planned programme at 12 noon on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 the Chattra Federation<sup>2</sup>, Chattra Union<sup>3</sup>, Samajtantrik Chattra Front<sup>4</sup> and Progotishil Chattra Jote of Jagannath University branch commenced a protest march from the Central Shahid Minar<sup>5</sup>. Md. Nizam Uddin, Senior Joint Convener of Bangladesh Chattra League, Jagannath University branch, who was known to Shariful Islam Chowdhury tried to stop the march with his activists. At one stage, the activists of Chattra League attacked the procession in front of the police. Masud Rana, General Secretary of Samajtantrik Chattra Front; Tahmida Islam Tania, Organiser of Chattra Federation; Azad; Faruque Ahmed Abir; Hasan; Sajib; Mishu; Murshed; Tithi; Habiba; Asha; Kishore Kumar; Ruddro; and Monokesh Roy of the Chattra Federation and 15 other students were injured.

The activists of Chattra League attacked the protest march three times that day. Shariful Islam Chowdhury was beaten badly by them. He was kicked in different parts of body and beaten more severely when he tried to escape. As a result, his left hand was fractured and he was admitted to the emergency unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital by his classmates at 1.30 in the afternoon. Azad and Masud were also admitted at the hospital.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 27/3 of Jagannath University Act, 2005 stipulated that for the purpose of setting up the University, the University authority would provide up to 16% from it’s own fund and the remaining portion would be provided by the government.

<sup>2</sup> Chattra Federation is a student group that also works for the welfare of the students.

<sup>3</sup> Chattra Union is another student group formed for student related activities.

<sup>4</sup> Samajtantrik Chattra Front is another student activist group.

<sup>5</sup> Shahid Minar is a memorial for the martyrs of the Bangla language movement of 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1952.

**Tahmida Islam Tania ( Injured student), Organiser of Chattra Fedaration, Jagannath University branch, Dhaka**

Tahmida Islam Tania informed Odhikar that, the member of Jagannath University Proctorial Body ignored the rules of the University and had taken 5,000 Tk. Extra from the students of 2011-2012 session. She accompanied other activists of the Chattra Federation to alert the matter to the Vice Chancellor (VC) and requested him to not take additional money from the students. Nevertheless, the administrative body of Jagannath University had taken the additional admission fee. As a consequence, the Chattra Federation with the support of general students announced a protest movement. On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 in accordance to a pre-declared schedule of events, they commenced a protest march with the general students starting from the Shahid Minar. The activists of the Chattra League attacked them and physically assaulted them. The procession retreated, but later commenced again to the Shahid Minar. When they reached the Shahid Minar the activists of the Chattra League attacked them again. At that time, they were thrown to the ground and kicked. Suddenly the activists pulled Tania's *Orna*<sup>6</sup>. She was injured with 15 other students. Sariful Islam Chowdhury, President of Samajtantrik Chattra Front fractured his left hand and protesters Ahad and Masud were seriously injured. Later, they were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2012, according to a pre-declared programme, at around 11 in the morning, after a procession, students took part in a 'blockade programme'. The students locked the gate of the Psychology department building. Later, the Proctor, Professor Dr. Kamaluddin Ahmed and the teachers of Psychology department namely Ashok Kumar and Jayeda broke the lock with a hammer and opened the gate.

**Faruque Ahmed Abir (Injured student), President, Chattra Union, Jagannath University branch, Dhaka**

Faruque Ahmed Abir told Odhikar that undergraduate admission fees for the 2005-06 session at the Arts and Commerce Faculty was 9,885 Tk. and for the Science Faculty it was 10,348 Tk., whereas in the 2009-10 session they were 14,400 Tk. and 16,400 Tk. respectively. For admission in the 2011-12 session the University authority had taken 5,000Tk. extra as campus development fee; 1,000 Tk. for registration fee; 500 Tk. for library fee; 2,500 Tk. for semester

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<sup>6</sup> A long scarf, part of the Salwar kameez outfit worn by women in South Asia.

fee; 600 Tk. for supporting fund fee; 500 Tk. as exam centre fee. Added up, this was an excessive amount.

Despite a prolonged movement, the declaration of canceling section 27(4)<sup>7</sup> of the Jagannath University Act, 2005 has not been implemented yet. Thus, Chattra Union commenced a protest march according to a pre-scheduled programme to cancel the additional 5,000 Tk. When the march reached the liberation war sculpture on campus, the Jagannath University Authority induced the activists of Chattra League to attack and the protesting students fled to the Science Faculty and reconvened, only to face another attack at the Shahid Minar.

The protesting students locked the entrance of the Jagannath University branch of the Agrani Bank, as a part of the protest. The Proctor and other teachers removed the students by force from the gate of the Bank. Then, the activists of the Chattra League attacked them again. The Chattra League activists had thrown down Faruque and began hitting him. They pulled his hair and punched him in the chest. Later the activists of Chattra Union took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for the treatment.

**Mishu Akhter (Injured student), Chattra Federation, Jagannath University, Dhaka**

Mishu Akhter informed Odhikar that, on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 the students of Progotishil Chattra Jote with other general students organised a protest march against the payment of an additional 5,000 Tk. in the name of ‘campus development’ fee. The march commenced at the Shahid Minar, while the University administrative body induced the activists of Chattra League to attack them. Mishu Akhter was kicked, punched and badly hurt.

**Mohammad Nizam Uddin, Joint Convener, Bangladesh Chattra League, Jagannath University branch, Dhaka**

Mohammad Nizam Uddin recalled that on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 at 12 noon the activists of Chattra League commenced a procession for the celebration of 46 years of the Organization in the Jagannath University campus. When the procession reached the Shahid Minar, two fractions of Chattra League got into an altercation. He said that the activists of Chattra League did not attack the protest march of the Progotishil Chattra Jote. He added that the Progotishil Chattra Jote and general students got into an altercation, whereby the students of Progotishil Chattra Jote were injured.

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<sup>7</sup> Section 27(4) of the Jagannath University Act, 2005 stipulated that the University would run on public funds for five years and the University would need to generate its own funds after that period.

**Sujaul Haque, Eye witness (wished to remain anonymous)**

Sujaul Haque informed Odhikar that on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2012 at 12 noon when the Progotishil Chattra Jote commenced a protest march to cancel the extra 5,000 Tk. ‘campus development fee’ the activists of Chattra League attacked the procession in two places – at the Liberation War Sculpture and at the Shaheed Minar. The activists of Chattra League kicked, slapped and punched the protesters. At that time, Mishu, Tania, Masud (General Secretary of the Chattra Front), Tahmida Islam Tania (Organiser of Chattra Federation), Azad, Faruque Ahmed Abir, Hasan, Sajib, Murshed, Tithi, Habiba, Asha, Kishore Kumar, Rudro, Monkesh Roy and 15 other students were wounded and injured. The activists of Chattra League attacked them when they locked the gate of Psychology department building under a ‘blockade programme’. Later, the injured students were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for the treatment.

**Mohammad Toufidul Islam Bulbul, Joint Convener, Bangladesh Chattra League, Jagannath University, Dhaka**

Mohammad Toufidul Islam Bulbul told Odhikar that, the extra payment of ‘campus development fee’ of 5,000 Tk. is less, compared to other Universities. The Vice Chancellor of Jagannath University called the leaders of all the student groups to discuss the issue on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012. That day was also the birth anniversary of the Chattra League, so the date of the meeting was changed to 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2012. Despite the Progotoshil Chattra Jote knowing of the matter and the meeting, they started a protest movement to reduce the fee.

**Professor Dr. Mesbahuddin, Vice Chancellor, Jagannath University, Dhaka**

Professor Dr. Mesbahuddin told Odhikar that according to the section 27/3 of the Jagannath University Act, 2005, the government paid 84% for campus development purpose and the remaining 16% was given from the University’s own fund. Thus, the additional amount of 5,000 Tk. for the campus development fee had been taken in the 2011-12 session. He said that, the fresher’s had no problem about paying it; but a few of the students irrationally lead a movement to cancel the fee. He invited all student groups to a meeting several times and talked with them and also said that the University would return the money to the students if necessary. But, in the mean time, some of the students had already been admitted in the University and had paid the fees. In such a situation, the amount of 5,000 Tk. could not be cancelled. The protestors locked the gate of the Agrani Bank, Jagannath University branch which was later opened by the Proctor.

The protesting students insulted the Proctor and other teachers when they re-opened the gate of the bank.

**Sheikh Farid Ahmed, Manager, Agrani Bank, Jagannath University branch, Dhaka**

Sheikh Farid Ahmed told Odhikar that, he heard that on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 students commenced a protest march to cancel the campus development fee of 5,000 Tk. in the University area. But, the Bank was not locked. Fresher students were able to pay their admission fees. However, protesting students locked the University entrance to the Bank.

**Mohammad Salauddin Khan, Officer-in-charge (OC), Kotowali Police Station, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Area (DMP), Dhaka**

Mohammad Salauddin Khan stated to Odhikar that, on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 there was no police around the procession which was carried out by the Progotishil Chattra Jote. Thus, the complaint of the Progotishil Chattra Jote against the police who restrained the protest march was false. However, the Vice Chancellor (VC) of Jagannath University placed a written objection against the Progotishil Chattra Jote. He accepted the written objection but did not file it as an F.I.R (First information report).

**Duty Doctor, Emergency Unit, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka**

It was not possible to contact all the doctors who treated the students as they were admitted in the emergency unit. However, one doctor who was engaged in the treatment of the students and wished to remain anonymous, told Odhikar that one of the students received fractures in his right knee joint and one of them got a fracture on his right elbow.

**Follow-up**

On 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012 when Odhikar contacted the Proctor of the Jagannath University and the members of Samajtantrik Chattra Front and Chattra Union, they said that on 15th January 2012 they had reached an amicable decision to reduce the campus development fee for the 2011 – 2012 sessions from 5000 Tk to 2000 Tk.