

Brac University continues to waive all non-tuition fees for Covid-hit students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac University would continue to waive all non-tuition fees for upcoming fall semester to students who have been particularly affected by the coronavirus crisis.

The university authorities in a statement yesterday said that Vice-Chancellor Professor Vincent Chang launched in May the Student Assistant Fund (SAF) for the summer semester 2020 to ease students' financial burdens.

Initially, Tk 15 crore was committed for the fund in the summer. That sum was adjusted to Tk 23 crore. Every student received full non-tuition fee waivers and 10 percent tuition scholarships. Some received more than 10 percent and up to 100 percent.

Now, as the fall semester is approaching, the pandemic remains a challenge. Super cyclone Amphan and the flooding in July added to the situation. Prof Chang, therefore, decided again to pool various funds to keep SAF running, although the university itself has faced very tight financial constraints, said the statement.

The components of the SAF for the upcoming fall semester will be similar to those for the summer semester: Every student will receive full non-tuition fee waivers and 10 percent tuition scholarships. Some may receive more than 10 percent in the form of additional help.

In June, Brac University introduced online learning platform buX, to provide the students with an in-house learning platform.

"Our students are our top priority. buX is the heart of 'Brac University X', our new virtual campus. It shall enrich remote learning and be assessable to all students. It is our intent that with SAF and buX, we leave no one behind," said Prof Chang.



A roadside bazar set up at Sreepur Bus Stand area in Savar's Nabinagar is becoming a cause for concern, as vehicles take to the street following the end of the lockdown. The makeshift market takes up half of a lane, constricting space for vehicular movement.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Char Ronger Basha' premiered

CITY DESK

HerStory Foundation and Cholpori recently premiered "Char Ronger Basha", a short stop-motion animation depicting Bangabandhu's visions for the founding principles of Bangladesh.

Created to celebrate Mujib Borsho for the EDTech Startup platform -- a collaboration of the ICT Division and Education Ministry -- the content was uploaded from HerStory's Facebook page last week. The video has already attracted over 3.5 million people, said a press release.

The animation was premiered on August 21, on a live-streamed webinar, inaugurated by Minister of

Education Dr Dipu Moni.

The programme was also attended by Barrister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury, MP, Deputy Minister of Education; Asaduzzaman Noor, MP; Dr Mashiur Rahman, Economic Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister; Professor Nasreen Ahmad, Former Pro-VC, Dhaka University; NM Zeaul Alam PAA, Senior Secretary, ICT Division; and Tina F Jabeen, Managing Director, Startup Bangladesh Ltd.

Produced by Cholpori and HerStory Foundation, it was created by Opopogo Studios and Kazi House Productions, the animation was by Amit Ashraf and Saiq'a S Chowdhury.

Trans fat

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from such disease, said Prof Sohel Reza Choudhury of epidemiology and research at NHFHRI.

"In order to protect public health from TFA, the government must take legal or regulatory measures and limit TFA to maximum 2g per 100g in all fats, oils, and foods," he said, while presenting the findings.

Prof Nazma Shaheen of Dhaka University's Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, who provided research support, said it is highly important to reduce the TFA levels in PHOs to 2 percent immediately in order to curb health risks.

The research team interviewed market retailers throughout Dhaka city, and identified four PHO brands, most commonly used by bakeries and restaurants for preparing food.

Later, 24 samples of those four brands were collected from wholesale markets and PHO production factories.

The chemical compounds of the samples were analysed and identified in collaboration with Portugal-based National Health Institute Food Chemistry Laboratory.

The average TFA level in the PHO samples was found to be 11g per 100g sample, more than five times the global standard, said the report.

Also, there was a vast variation in the TFA levels found within the same brands whereas seven samples of one brand contained TFA levels ranging from 0.69g to 14.5g, it said.

WHO estimates excessive intake of industrially produced TFA is responsible for more than 500,000 deaths related to heart diseases globally, said the release.

On the other hand, around 2.77 lakh people die of heart disease each year in Bangladesh, it said.

Considering the grave health risks involved, WHO has set eliminating industrially produced TFA from the global food supply by 2023 as one of its priority targets, it added.

'Was tortured into confessing husband's murder'

Woman accuses Barishal police; new details emerge in deed writer killing case

SUSHANTA GHOSH

A woman who has been accused in her husband's murder case has accused Barishal Metropolitan Police members of torture and molestation in custody, and forcing her to confess as an accomplice to the murder.

She submitted this accusation against BMP personnel to the district police commissioner, and demanded withdrawal of her confessional statement.

She also sought punishment for the police officers who tortured her.

On the morning of April 19, 2019, deed writer Raj Hawlader was killed using a sharp weapon at his home in Bukhainagar village. His wife Amina Akhtar Liza was arrested after the deceased's brother Ripon filed a case against unknown miscreants at Kotwali police station.

Liza confessed the next day at metropolitan court that she had an affair with Raj's assistant Masum and they had planned to loot her husband's money after murdering him.

Meanwhile, a man named Jalil

Shikder of Raghunathpur village in Bakerganj Upazila of Barishal was arrested in August 14 this year in Raj's murder case.

Following his confession, two others named Raihan Chowkidar (20) and Sakil Hawlader (20) were arrested in the same upazila on charges of theft and murder.

The duo gave confessional statement in the Barisal Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on August 28, said Sagir Hossain, investigative officer (IO) and inspector of the Kawnia Police Station.

Inspector Sagir mentioned that Liza had said that she had mixed sleeping pills in her husband's glass of milk, and later Masum killed Raj with a sharp weapon. However, a forensic report by the CID found no traces of sleeping pills in the milk.

Upon finding this discrepancy, senior police officers assigned Kotwali police station's sub-inspector Firoz Al Mamun to investigate the matter, but he could not find any clues.

"The case was finally handed over to me on February 23 [this year]," said

Sagir Hossain, "

Nayem Hossain Babu, another person who was arrested in the case soon after Liza, was also released on bail alongside Liza in February.

"I spoke with them and began tracking the case. I was eventually able to arrest Jalil and his accomplices. The deceased Raj's mobile phone was recovered from Jalil's sister. Other information also became available through these developments," said Inspector Sagir.

"A charge sheet will be submitted soon. This is a sensitive case. However, the motive of the murder was to grab Raj's money," he added.

Amina Akhtar Liza told The Daily Star, "I was in the next room when my husband was killed. But the police did not listen to any reason. I was arrested and beaten mercilessly by a police officer called Bashir and some other members of the force."

"They threw water in my face, squeezed and hurt my limbs, and at one point, Bashir molested me. I was forced to sign a confession after this torture as they threatened to also go

after my mother and brother. SI Bashir and Firoz took money from them. I was two weeks pregnant when I was tortured," said Liza.

"I was granted bail by High Court in February and I lodged a written complaint to the police commissioner. I will appeal to the court on September 8 to withdraw my confession. I want punishment for those who tortured me inhumanly," she said.

Md Bashiruddin, sub-inspector of Kotwali police station and first IO said to this newspaper, "This is a matter of court and the arrested woman confessed."

He, however, denied allegations on torturing her.

Meanwhile, plaintiff Ripon thinks this was all a blueprint to save the real murderers.

Police Commissioner of BMP Md Shahabuddin Khan said the case has been handed over to a competent officer for further investigation.

"It will be clear whether there was any torture after the report is filed and action will be taken if the accusation is found true," he said.

Bangladeshi

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"Team Bangladesh has maintained a steady 1st ranking for the past 5 weeks as of the 2nd of September, 2020," Shams Jaber, mentor of Team Bangladesh, said in a release.

FIRST Global Challenge is often referred to as the high school equivalent to the robot Olympics, with participation from almost all the countries.

Bangladesh has been participating in the FIRST Global Challenge since its inception in 2017, reads the release.

Team Bangladesh has been on a journey to the top ranks of the challenge, from being in the first hundreds to ranking 7th among 190 countries in the 2019 FIRST Global Challenge, hosted in Dubai.

Every year, young people passionate about STEM are given a challenge that is intended to solve some of the greatest challenges the earth and its people face, including the 14 Grand Challenges for Engineering, the release added.

In 2019, the challenge was Ocean Opportunities, to highlight the threat that pollution brings to the earth's oceans. Team Bangladesh came out of the tournament as quarter-finalists.

This year, Team Bangladesh comprises of Sujoy Mahmud (17) from Mangrove School; Razeen Ali (18) from Sir John Wilson School; Mahi Zarif (16) from International Hope School; Shahrear Shemanto (16) from DPS STS; Abrar Jawad (15) from Bangladesh International School and College; Aymaan Rahman (15) from Bangladesh International School and College; Bianca Hassan (19) from Dhanmondi Tutorial; Zahraa Chowdhury (14) from Sunbeams; Areebah Anwar (14) from South Breeze; and Fairooz Hafiz Farin (18) from Mastermind -- with chief mentor Shams Jaber, technical mentor Shoaib Mirza and Fardin Ananta as assistant mentor.

The theme for 2020 is connecting communities. Therefore, the challenges aim to integrate social, cultural elements with the creativity and innovation behind STEM, making it more comprehensive.

Ban veterinary

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"We have banned diclofenac but ketoprofen is still being produced," he added.

Ziaul Hasan, secretary to the ministry, said, "The government banned ketoprofen in two 'vulture zones'. As a result, its production decreased by 10 percent. We will take more steps to reduce its usage after discussing with all the stakeholders."

"The present government is providing all necessary helps to save our nature and environment," he mentioned.

Billal Hossain, additional secretary to the ministry, and chair of Bangladesh Vulture National Recovery Committee, said there are almost 10-15 pharmaceutical companies producing meloxicam as an alternative to diclofenac.

"If they can produce sufficient meloxicam and supply it throughout the country, it will be easier to ban ketoprofen," he said.

Enam-Ul-Haque, founder of Bangladesh Bird Club, said, "We should stop using ketoprofen right now... even before the government imposes a ban on it."

Chris Bowden, programme manager of SAVE RSPD and co-chair of IUCN Vulture Specialist Group, said, "Bangladesh is playing a leading role in conservation of vultures among six countries in Asia."

However, Nepal is ahead in reducing usage of diclofenac. Ketoprofen is a threat to vulture conservation efforts in Bangladesh, he said.

Among others, chair of the webinar, Amir Hossain Chowdhury, also chief conservator of forests, summarised the discussion. Habibun Nahar, deputy minister for environment, forest and climate change; Mihir Kumar Doe, conservator of forest; Sirajul Hoque, director of Animal Health Division at Renata Limited; Muqueeb Majumdar Babu, chairman of Prokriti O Jibon Foundation; and Raquibul Amin, country representative, IUCN Bangladesh, also spoke at the webinar.

Raquibul Amin Chowdhury, country representative of IUCN, moderated the session.

10,430

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nutrition, health risks, exposure to gender-based violence at home and in public, as well as social stigma are but a few of the issues they are facing.

Under the project, about 300 women in Dhaka and Manikganj will receive a package that includes masks, hand washing bar, detergent powder, and basic food items, the release said.

Some 10,000 women in 10 districts will receive health-hygiene products that include masks, hand-washing bar, detergent powder, shampoo, and toothpaste.

Addressing as chief guest, Expatriates' Welfare Ministry Secretary Ahmed Munir Saleheen said, "We encourage safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration and we expect civil society and NGOs to help us ensure that."

Rashedul Quayum, secretary and legal director of Unilever Bangladesh, also spoke at the event.

Too much

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Earlier at the beginning of the season, 800-1,000 maunds of hilsa were coming into the market, but now it's around the 2,500 to 3,000 maund-mark.

Officials and experts attribute this increase to favourable weather conditions and tight monitoring and supervision of hilsa catching.

Hilsha researcher Dr Md Anisur Rahman, principal scientific officer of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, said, "This year will see more hilsa than previous years. The programme to protect hilsa has been successfully going on since 2017, which focuses on protecting the mother fish."

"There has been a lot of rainfall at the beginning of the monsoon this year, which is favourable for hilsa breeding and growth."

Azizul Haque, divisional director of Directorate of Fisheries, said hilsa production is increasing every year due to implementation of government's hilsa protection programme. Last year, the Barishal division saw a total of 3.29 lakh tonnes of hilsa out of 5.17 lakh tonnes produced in the country, he added.

Bimol Chandra Das, district fisheries officer (hilsa), Barishal, said the average weight of hilsa increased from previous years by almost 10 to 20 percent.

However, the exuberant mood of the officials are not transmitting to anglers and traders as much.

Angler Hasem mia, of Nurabad village under Bhola's Charfassion upazila, told The Daily Star he started netting at the Bay of Bengal around 10 days ago and managed to catch 130 maunds of hilsa. Most of the fish are above one kg, with some even above the 1,500 to 2,000 gramme mark.

"But with the rate at which the fish is selling, we're unable to get fair returns," he lamented.

On hilsa exporting, the divisional director of Directorate of Fisheries said the decision lies with the commerce ministry.

He hoped a decision in this regard will be taken soon.

About cold storage facilities, the district fisheries officer said they will look into the matter and try to come up with a solution to help traders.

Mati'r Gaan

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"My music is only to please my Creator. I never wanted to make a fortune with this. I'm a blind man, hence I don't have any other way to earn a living. That is the sole reason behind me trying to make a living out of it," artiste Humayun Kabir told this correspondent.

"I enjoyed performing for this initiative. This is also helping me get through these hard times. I'm glad this initiative was taken, it's great for supporting folk music in the country," he added.

The initiative has also helped Sushanta Kumar Paul, a Rajshahi based potter to sell his products online to

urban customers.

"After we put up the post about Paul's works on our Facebook page, our inbox was flooded with orders. The demand was huge, and he had to make an entirely new batch to meet this demand. Just a few months ago, he was unable to sell anything, and now he's even making profit," said Raful.

Raise awareness

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pioneering organisation in Spinal Cord Injury not just in Bangladesh but also in the global context. The centre's service is top-notch and there is room to improve government collaboration and acute care services, because CRP has world-class professionals, he mentioned.

Asif Iqbal Chowdhury, an SCI survivor, said the impact of CRP's service is reflected by patients' satisfaction and empowerment.

Mahfuz Anam lauded CRP for working devotedly for the people of Bangladesh regardless of economic status, ethnicity, or physical barriers.

There is very poor awareness of medical professionals and general people on CRP's services and glorious journey, he added.

Julian Francis mentioned the world is facing a unified crisis, but if an organisation like CRP is not supported by the local government, corporate society, or international quarters, its adverse impact will be on the vulnerable population in Bangladesh.

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Memo No. PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/Civil/2019-20/371 Date: 02/09/2020

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Sl No.	Tender ID	APP ID	Package No & Invitation Ref. No	Name of works	Tender publication date & time	Tender closing date & time	Method
1	489261	156085	PUST/Engg office/Civil/egp/04	Supplying Fitting and Fixing of Sanitary and Plumbing fittings for different Office Dept. at PUST. FY 2019-2020	06-Sep-2020 15:00	28-Sep-2020 12:00	OTM
2	489113	156085	PUST/Engg office/Civil/egp/03	Sand/earth filling work under the Administrative Building Cafeteria Dormitory Padma Ichamoti Central Library Sheikh Hasina Hall etc. Building of Pabna University of Science & Technology, Pabna FY 2019-2020	06-Sep-2020 15:00	29-Sep-2020 12:00	OTM

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