



Although about 8 percent of Bangladesh's total waste comprises of plastic, little is being done to challenge it. Of the 8,00,000 tonnes of plastic waste produced every year, around a quarter goes into rivers and oceans, but the lack of regulation is appalling. There is almost no obstruction on dumping plastic into the river, nor is there any in its collection. In this photo taken from Kamrangirchar, a rainbow of plastic waste collected from the river are laid out to dry by workers. Once dried, they will be melted and turned into new plastic materials.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



SIXTH TO NINTH GRADERS

Govt warns students against copying, using guides in assignments

DSHE issues directives to schools; submissions must be handwritten, can be turned in online too

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government has warned all sixth to ninth-grade students that if they complete assignments using third-party guidebooks or copy from others, teachers would cancel the assignment and ask them to resubmit it.

It made the warning when notifying all teachers and school authorities what will be assignments for students of sixth to ninth grades, in place of annual examinations.

Assignments will be given to school and madrasa students on first day of the week and they would submit handwritten copies at the end of the week. Students will be able to submit and take the assignment in person or via a guardian from the school, or online.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) officials said they took the measure as students will get the necessary elements of doing assignments from textbooks. It will also help students reduce undue dependency on notebooks, guidebooks, they said.

"We have uploaded the assignment process on our website. We hope guardians will help students regarding avoiding guidebooks," DSHE Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk told The Daily Star.

"Teachers will strictly supervise and monitor whether any students are using

guidebooks," he added.

Classes at schools and madrasas have remained shut for more than seven months amid the Covid-19 pandemic since March 17. The government has already announced extension of the closure until November 14.

The government is starting assignment-giving and taking process, after Education Minister Dipu Moni on October 21 announced that students of sixth to ninth grades would be promoted to the next classes this year without any annual examinations.

Instead, school authorities will give assignments to the pupils every week to identify their learning shortcomings.

According to the academic calendar, their annual exams were scheduled to be held between November 28 and December 10.

Before the announcement, students and guardians all over the country were confused about the process of promotion to higher classes.

The directive issued regarding assignments, uploaded on DSHE website on Saturday midnight, said the government took the initiative as students were not able to complete the syllabus due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Each school should open assignments

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BOOKS BRIEFING

Dhaka Comics seeks horror stories



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY: MEHEDI HAQUE

STAR BOOKS DESK

Dhaka Comics, a Bangladeshi comic book publisher founded in 2013, is holding an online comic book writing contest to promote budding artists of all ages. This year, the annual contest's theme is horror comics.

The popular publisher has asked interested artists to send their work by November 10.

After an initial screening process, selected works will be uploaded to the "web comics" section of Dhaka Comics' website. Winners will be chosen by public ratings and a jury board and announced on November 15.

The publisher told The Daily Star it's looking for originality, local context in storytelling, and quality of drawing and storytelling in the entries. Since winning pieces will be added as "web comics" -- which is a different genre from regular comic books -- Dhaka Comics will add some animation and sound effect panels appropriate for the genre.

Winners will receive certificates and crests, and have their works published in a print comic book in February 2021.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Dhaka Comics highlighted that the youth of Bangladesh have the capability and energy to produce excellent stories with

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DMCH launches facility to manage mass casualties

It will help the hospital cope with influx of patients from incidents like Rana Plaza, Nimtoli tragedies

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and HELEMUL ALAM

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) has set up a mass casualty management centre to handle influx of patients due to disastrous incidents like Rana Plaza or Nimtoli tragedies.

This first of its kind facility in Bangladesh, built in the basement of DMCH's emergency building, will be able to treat over 100 patients at a time.

Named CBRN and Mass Casualty Management Centre, the facility has two components -- one will treat people exposed to chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear (CBRN) hazards while the other will provide treatment to victims of any major accident.

"DMCH has been the 'go to' hospital for patients across the country, especially the impoverished. The daily inflow of patients at the hospital has been two times higher than its capacity," said DMCH Director Brig Gen AKM Nasir Uddin.

"But it becomes unmanageable for us when a huge number of patients turns up at the hospital after an incident like Nimtoli or Rana Plaza tragedies," he told The Daily Star recently.

The chemical-induced Nimtoli inferno in June 2010 killed 124 people and injured over 100 while the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 killed at least 1,132 people and injured over 2,500.

"That's why we have set up a Mass Casualty Management Centre," said the DMCH director.

He said they have also set up the CBRN Casualty Management Centre considering the rise in use of hazardous chemicals at factories and keeping in mind the global campaign on hospital disaster preparedness and response against it.

"Besides, the construction of a nuclear power plant is going on in the country," said Nasir Uddin.

Both the centres will be able to provide treatment facilities without interrupting normal activities at the emergency department, said the DMCH director, who initiated the move last year to build the facility at a place meant for car parking but later turned into a warehouse.

CBRN Casualty Management Centre has three zones -- red, yellow and green. It also has three ICU beds, a High Dependency Unit, central oxygen supply system, an operation theatre, separate rooms for male and female patients and a reception triage in the red zone. At least 56 patients could be decontaminated at a time in this facility, he said.

"It is possible to decontaminate 280 patients within an hour as we have the capacity of decontaminating a patient within five minutes," said Nasir Uddin,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Bring political leaders, activists under dope test

Says AL MP Shamsul Haque Tuku

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shamsul Haque Tuku, Awami League MP and chief of the parliamentary standing committee on Ministry of Home Affairs, yesterday urged authorities to bring leaders and activists of political parties under dope test.

"Dope test for police officers has started. The prime minister has already given instructions to launch dope test for bus drivers. Activities to test university admission seekers is also ongoing," he said at a programme at the media centre of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Tuku further said the demand and entry of drugs into the country will decrease if dope tests are carried out.

The parliamentary caucus on child rights, social welfare and development organised the programme with the theme "Dope test to control drugs: What should be done right now".



Faking his way to nobility

Man's plan to grab Nawab Salimullah's estate property thwarted by law enforcers

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

His plan was to grab Nawab Estate's property by falsely identifying himself as a descendant of Nawab Salimullah Khan's family. To get it, he had already filed five cases with land offices of Dhaka and Narayanganj.

To prove his false identity, he managed to create a birth certificate and passport under the name "Nawab Khawja Ali Hasan Askari".

He also obtained a digital national identity (NID) card in 2017, after submitting the false documents.

If that was not enough, he even claimed to be a nephew of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and interestingly, in the passport, he mentioned his permanent address as Ahsan Manzil.

Economic Crime Division of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit claimed to have gleaned the information after interrogating "Hasan", following his arrest on October 28.

Five of his associates were also caught from different areas of the capital.

Hasan is now on a three-day police remand. The associates were identified as Rashed alias Rahmat Ali alias Raja (34), his brothers Ahmed Ali (38) and Barkat Ali alias Rana (32), Meer Rakib Afsar (20) and Sajib alias Meer Rubel (33).

After Hasan's arrest surfaced, victims are now submitting complaints with CTTC daily, and three different cases have already been filed against him for fraudulence.

"We are receiving surprising information about Hasan and his fraudulent activities. He even contested the recent by-election to Dhaka-10 constituency as a Muslim League candidate under," Towhidul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of CTTC unit, told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Medical students block Shahbagh

Demand online classes, alternative to professional exams, and reducing fees

UNB, Dhaka

Several hundred students from medical and dental colleges yesterday blocked the capital's Shahbagh intersection to force authorities to accept their demands.

Students under the banner of "General Medical and Dental Students" demonstrated by blocking the road around 10am, disrupting vehicular movement.

Their demands include starting online classes, ensuring session jam-free academic year and cutting fees. They argued that online classes would ensure their safety and no session-jams.

They also demanded an alternative to professional examinations during the pandemic.

Protesters said they are unwilling to sit for professional exams, as the coronavirus situation is worsening.

"We want an alternative evaluation to resolve the session-jam issue," one of the demonstrators said.

"We want authorities to evaluate the exams we've taken so far this year and promote us, and start online classes," a protester said.

They also demanded cutting fees, which is an extra burden during the pandemic.

The protesters said they would continue their protests until their demands are met.



Students under the banner of "General Medical and Dental Students" blockaded the capital's Shahbagh intersection from 10am to press home their demands.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN

SBMCH intern doctors start indefinite strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Intern doctors of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal have gone for an indefinite strike, demanding withdrawal of a case filed against them.

The strike started from 2pm on Saturday as Assistant Registrar of Medicine Unit-4 at the hospital Masud Khan filed a case with Kotwali Police Station, accusing intern doctors of assaulting him.

The intern doctors' other demands include a stop to propaganda against them on social media and legal action against Dr Masud Khan in this regard.

On Friday, Intern Doctors Association (IDA) submitted a memorandum to the hospital director, demanding resignation of Dr Masud Khan for taking money from diagnostic centres unethically.

When contacted, Dr Masud and the intern doctors denied the allegations brought against each other.

Hospital director Dr Bakir Hossain said a committee was formed to investigate the allegations against Dr Masud. He is trying to resolve the crisis to minimise patients' suffering caused by the strike, he added.

Patients are suffering as all intern doctors are observing the strike. Many are leaving the hospital, said service seekers.

Fakar Uddin Sarder (75), who was admitted to the medicine ward-4, said no doctors were available from Saturday afternoon to Sunday noon.

Like Fakar Uddin, many patients are trying to get released from the hospital.