

BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,733
New cases in 24hrs



4,25,353
Total cases



6,127
Deaths



3,43,131
Recoveries



1,286,691
Deaths



52,271,282
Total cases

DU FACULTIES OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, FINE ARTS Scrapping of separate entry tests may complicate things

Say a number of experts

ASHIK ABDULLAH APUI

Complications may arise in evaluating subject-based skill and choosing eligible students if Dhaka University authorities approve the Deans' Committee's recent decision to abolish separate admission tests for Social Science and Fine Arts faculties, some academics opined.

It will also act as an impediment for students who want to change academic streams, they observed.

In a meeting, the Deans' Committee of the DU on Sunday decided against arranging separate admission tests for Social Science and Fine Arts faculties ("Gha" and "Cha" units) from the 2021-22 academic year.

It means the DU will hold admission tests in three units instead of the usual five from the next academic year, with the two faculties to be merged with the three main disciplines -- science, arts and business.

The decision is subject to approval of the Academic Council, the apex body of the DU.

Talking to The Daily Star, Professor Sadeka Halim, dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, said the decision surprised her.

"I was surprised that the matter was discussed in the meeting... The VC raised the issue at the very last stage of the meeting. I had then thought that maybe he was saying this after giving it some thought, because I have seen some deans echo the VC," said Sadeka Halim.

She also said that the issue was not even in the agenda of Sunday's meeting.

"I am not just a dean; I am also a representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The admission test of 'Gha' unit has been taking place for 25 years and that is because of the decision of the multi-disciplinary committee. Neither I nor the VC has the jurisdiction to shut admission tests of any unit in DU. Admission test of a unit cannot be stopped by force," she said.

There are about 300 teachers and they also have their opinions, she added.

"The matter will definitely come up in the Academic Council. Our teachers

will give their feedback there," she said.

Prof Halim said she was expecting the VC to talk about more pressing issues in Sunday's meeting, like modernising the online education programme, providing electronic devices or data packages at cheap rates.

"But without discussing it, he talked about not taking admission tests in two units. Why is that? Is it the vice-chancellor's job to drag the university back 100 years?"

She said such a decision is illogical, ridiculous and against DU's achievements over the last 100 years.

Another academic, preferring not to be named, said the decision would bar students from switching academic streams.

"Gha (social science) unit is a unit that allows students to change streams. And without a separate test how can the skill of a student who does not want to study science be judged?" he questioned.

"The remark the VC made in the media has confused us a bit," said Prof Nisar Hossain, acting dean of Fine Arts.

"Students do not appear in any test related to Fine Arts up to twelfth grade. That's why we admit students with a separate test on the subject of drawing and we have been applying this method for the last 72 years," said Prof Nisar Hossain.

"But yesterday, the VC sent a single letter to the deans in which he wrote that fine arts subjects -- dance, music and drama -- are creative and they will come up with a strategy on how to evaluate the students in these subjects," he said.

"If so, I have no objection in the case of fine arts. It doesn't matter whether it is a unit or not. What I am worried about is taking the test in the right way."

Contacted, DU Vice-chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman said fewer tests would "alleviate the suffering of teachers, students and parents, bridge the gap between rural-urban students and reduce dependency on coaching centres."

He also said question papers would be prepared in such a way that a textbook-centric study habit grows among students.



Villagers catching fish yesterday morning as the flood water began to recede from the low-lying Baliapur area in Aminbazar, Savar.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

The pursuit of a dignified life

FROM PAGE 1

To find a shore," she says rhythmically, as if she was reciting a poem.

"I'm a candle that doesn't know when it will be put out," she says.

She says she sells newspapers to people -- most of whom mistreat her.

"How miserable is the life that's dependent on others!" she says, adding, "I sustain myself by selling newspapers. Is it dishonourable? How am I offending anyone?"

Born into a well-off family, Khuki's life could have been different.

According to family members, Khuki is 10th among seven sisters and five brothers. She attended Bharateswari Homes boarding school in Tangail in the 1980s, and was married off, widowed at an early age.

Her husband's untimely death came as a shock and Khuki decided not to remarry.

In 1991, she started working as a newspaper hawkker by selling the now defunct Rajshahi-based weekly Duniya.

Ahmed Shafi Uddin, a retired official of Rajshahi University was the helmsman behind the weekly. He recalled how Khuki got started as a hawkker.

Khuki's brother-in-law Abdul Aziz took her to meet Shafi Uddin -- looking for a job for her at the weekly.

"She was in her 20s. I could not find a job for her, as she didn't know how to write. I asked them to go home and joked that I couldn't find her any other job besides that of a hawkker," he said.

"A few days later, Khuki came to me and insisted for the job of a hawkker.

We were worried about her but she overcame all the hurdles. She started with 20 copies, and in no time was selling 500 copies a week. Gradually, she began selling daily newspapers," he said.

"She was well-mannered and well-versed. Subscribers liked her," he added.

"Sadly, she had to endure repeated harassment and assaults," Shafi Uddin said.

Jamiul Karim Sujon, former president of the city's newspaper hawkers' association, said Khuki sells over 300 copies of newspapers every day now.

"She sold more before. Now, because of wider access to internet and digital news, the demand for newspapers is on the wane. She buys newspapers with cash, never leaves anyone unpaid. She denies handouts if offered. Rather, she tries to help out whoever is in need," he said.

This correspondent met Khuki at Sagarpara area recently while she was resting on a footpath.

She said she inherited properties from her parents and husband.

She bought sewing machines and bicycles for several young women and their husbands, and regularly donated to orphanages, mosques and temples.

She has helped a number of families become self-reliant by buying them cattle.

She took this correspondent to her home in Seroil area -- a one-storey building with three rooms, surrounded by a wall covered in weeds.

Her room looked like it hadn't been

cleaned in days. Hundreds of empty plastic bottles were strewn about and there was dirt on her bed and in her living room.

Khuki showed old, laminated photographs, bringing them out from a steel almirah.

In one photograph, she was receiving a bouquet; in another, she was addressing a rally -- glimpses of her life in the 1990s.

She buys food from street vendors, Nahid Akter Tania, a neighbour said.

"She has none to look after her. Most of her neighbours are her relatives, yet they never cared for her enough," she said, adding that Khuki has been offered assistance but refuses to accept.

Locals said some of Khuki's relatives tried to deprive her from her inheritance, but the locals helped her secure her ownership to her home. They mentioned attempts to grab her home.

When contacted, Khuki's nephew Shams-ur Rahman denied the allegations.

He said, "She is an embarrassment to the family. She doesn't like being assisted, and neighbours get the impression that the family is not helping her. It is the family who takes care of her when needed."

Khuki says her last wish is to be buried in Kushtia -- where she spent some of her fondest childhood years with her family -- and wants to leave her properties to orphans and students of the school she went to in that district town, but says she doesn't know how she would ensure that.

Change plan

FROM PAGE 1

The director could not give any information immediately.

MAN Siddique, managing director of DMTCL, said they did not receive any letter in this regard.

"We have got approval from the PMO and we have already started our work for expansion of the line," he told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

The MRT-6 is the country's first-ever metro rail, now under construction at a cost of Tk 22,000 crore with soft loan from Japan.

The Kamalapur hub is going to be implemented under a government-to-government public-private partnership project.

A Japanese consortium, led by Kajima Corporation, has already outlined a concept to turn the railway station into a multimodal transport hub.

The government has signed a memorandum of cooperation with Japan, and the basic concept was approved in the third Bangladesh-Japan joint platform meeting in March last year, read BR documents.

DEBATE OVER EXTENSION

The mass rapid transit (MRT) line-6 was initially designed as an elevated line from Uttara to Motijheel. Later, a skywalk was planned to connect the line with Kamalapur Railway Station.

Last year, DMTC planned to stretch the MRT line-6 directly to the rail station, following the prime minister's directive.

Bangladesh Railway opposed the proposal and cited its plan for the MmTH.

"After detailed discussions, it is found that the extension of MRT Line-6 will confront the basic theme of development of MmTH [Multimodal

Transport Hub] and other railway development work," read meeting minutes of the railways ministry.

Railway officials said they were not against the extension of MRT line-6 up to Kamalapur, but the DMTCL's current design would upset their MmTH plan. They had asked DMTCL to modify its blueprint.

The DMTCL sought the PMO's help in resolving the issue. A meeting, with Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Ahmad Kaikaus in the chair, gave the go-ahead to the DMTCL plan on September 3.

The meeting also directed the railways ministry to take immediate steps for allowing a station of MRT line-6 and a scissors crossover at Kamalapur Railway Station.

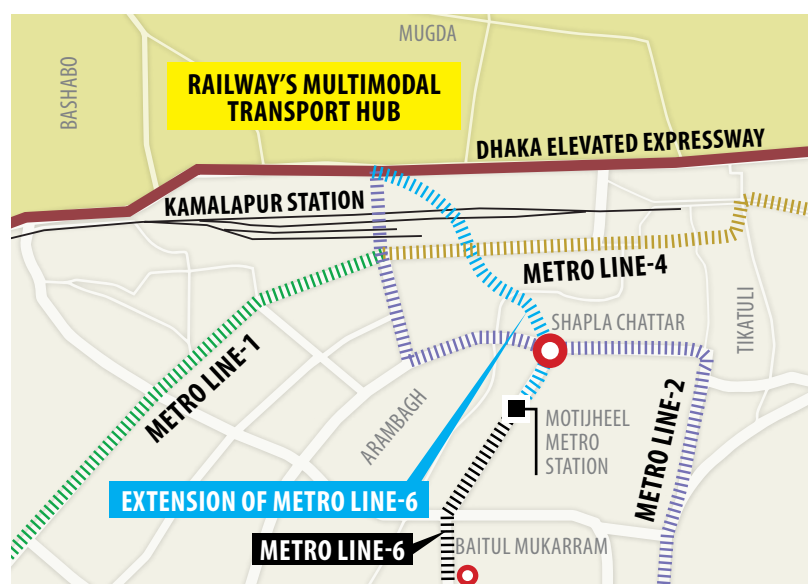
But the Kamalapur MmTH Sub Working Group said the plan was not "recommendable" because the elevated structure of MRT-6 would "fully close" the railway station, sources said.

Besides, the extension would reduce function of the plaza there, they said, apprehending that the plan could be a serious obstacle for the MmTH project.

It also requested the railways ministry to re-evaluate the alternative plan and sought time so that it could be explained directly.

The DMTCL authorities have already completed a topography survey and finalised the alignment for the additional 1.16km of MRT line-6.

The DMTCL MD earlier said that apart from some makeshift structures on the alignment of their MRT line-6 extension plan, 31 buildings would have to be demolished and their land acquired.



MP Papul sued for laundering Tk 148cr

FROM PAGE 1

Khan said enquiries were progressing and more cases would be filed over Papul and his family's illegal wealth.

If necessary, the investigation officer might take steps to detain the accused, he said, "If it is necessary to bring him [Papul] back to Bangladesh, we'll take measures according to the international law."

FINDINGS
According to the case filed yesterday, Jesmin's national identity card mentioned that she was born on August 20, 1995, but her passport said her date of birth was November 4, 1997.

She opened an e-TIN account on October 25, 2017, when she was a student, but she had never submitted her income tax returns.

"It appears that she does not have an income," reads the first information report of the case.

Jesmin has 34 FDRs of Tk 2.31 crore with the NRB Commercial Bank and "during interrogation, she could not show any legal source of the money."

The anti-graft watchdog found that Jesmin opened a High Value Savings

account with the City Bank on July 23, 2014. As of July 7, 2020, she deposited and withdrew about Tk 1.66 crore to and from that account.

Jesmin opened another savings account with the United Commercial Bank on June 02, 2012. Between 2012 and 2019, about Tk 10.34 crore was deposited and withdrawn.

She has another savings account with the UCBL corporate branch where she deposited about Tk 1.16 crore between October 2013 and June 2014. She withdrew about Tk 96.46 lakh from that account.

Jesmin also opened a current account for what she said was clothing store JW Leelabali with NRB Commercial Bank's Hatirpool Branch with Tk 20 lakh.

Between October 6, 2016 and August 20, 2019, different individuals and she herself deposited and withdrew about Tk 135.22 crore there, reads the FIR.

The ACC finds the money came from Papul and his wife who concealed the information about the money in their tax returns.

"Analysing the information, it is found that Jesmin used to work as the

medium and JW Leelabali only existed on paper."

This correspondent, however, found JW Leelabali in the capital's Mirpur. The boutique shop sells wedding outfits.

Preferring to be unnamed, a staff of the store told this correspondent over the phone that Jesmin was the owner.

Papul was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department in Kuwait on June 6. He was sent to prison there.

According to Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Rai, Papul also admitted to paying large sums of money to high officials including a security official. He also revealed to interrogators that former and serving Kuwaiti lawmakers were involved in the racket.

The ACC on February 16, opened an enquiry into the illegal wealth of Papul and his family members.

On July 22, the ACC quizzed Jesmin and Selina. Selina then told reporters that she and her husband had no undisclosed or illegal wealth. "All documents have been given to the ACC... we'll give all out assistance to the ACC."

Jesmin was with her at the time.

Director of Mind Hospital arrested, 4 others on run

FROM PAGE 1

Rapid Action Battalion, and the Police Headquarters.

Police said the hospital was being run without clearance and licence from related government departments. The facility was closed by police on Tuesday.

Anisul's father Faijuddin Ahmed filed the case with Adabor Police Station on Tuesday, accusing 15 people, including the five shareholders of the hospital, over murdering his 35-year-old son.

According to family members, Anisul had been suffering from mental stress. He kept quiet for three to four days before being admitted to the hospital on Monday.

Analysing the CCTV footage of the hospital, it was seen that Anisul was dragged into a soundproof room by several staffers and thrown to the ground by six employees.

Two more employees dressed in blue grabbed his leg and two others hit him with their elbow. Hospital staffer Arif was present all the while. Anisul's hands were tied behind his back with a piece of blue cloth.

There were no doctors at the soundproof room, police said.

Anisul, appointed as a police officer in the 31st special BCS, was working for Barishal Metropolitan Police (traffic). Earlier, he had served the DMP,

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said action would be taken against those found responsible for the death of the senior ASP.

"An investigation into the hospital and its employees is underway. The health department will be informed in this regard, if needed," he told reporters at the home ministry.

'AN HONEST OFFICER'

Files, telephones, chairs and tables at Anisul's office room at the traffic department of Barishal Metropolitan Police are there, but he will never return.

His colleagues remembered his last day at work on Saturday. He went to Dhaka on November 8 with his family on a 10-day leave due to a family necessity, said BMP sources.

"Anisul Karim sir was an honest officer," said Traffic Inspector Abdur Rahim.

BMP Deputy Commissioner Jakir Hossain Majumder said he did not notice anything unusual in the ASP's behaviour at the office.

"We are deeply saddened by the death of such a hardworking police officer. He had scored 194 out of 200 to stand first in the police special BCS exam. It's a great loss for all of us," he added.

Policemen, including at least 20 batchmates of Anisul, also visited his grave.

MUIJB BORSHO SESSION

Ensure freedom of press, make all constitutional bodies effective

JP lawmaker says at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party lawmaker Anisul Islam Mahmud has called for ensuring freedom of press and making all constitutional institutions meaningful and effective to build "Golden Bengal" as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He made the call in parliament while participating in the general discussion on a resolution on Bangabandhu's life and activities.

Taking part in the discussion, lawmakers from treasury and opposition benches stressed the need for implementing the ideology and philosophy of Bangabandhu to build the country as "Sonar Bangla".

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday tabled the resolution in parliament under rule-147 of the Rules of Procedure of the House to pay tribute to the Father of the Nation through holding a special discussion on his colourful political life, activities, and philosophy.

Yesterday was the third day of the discussion marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu.

Anisul said freedom of media will have to be ensured to make sure that there is accountability for the media.

The opposition MP said Bangabandhu spent his lifetime for the welfare of the people.

"Bangabandhu wanted democracy. Elections are always necessary for a democracy. But the elections have to be meaningful and acceptable to the people. This requires a strong and independent Election Commission."

Participating in the discussion, Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Miah demanded inclusion of Bangabandhu's historic March 7 speech in the school and college curriculum.

Awami League MP Abdul Matin Khashru said there should not any rank like Brigadier or Colonel before the names of killers of Bangabandhu.

He demanded that the government ensure capital punishment for all masterminds of Bangabandhu's assassination through forming a commission.

The resolution is scheduled to be passed in the House today.

AL activist murdered in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

An activist of the ruling Awami League was killed by a group of unidentified miscreants in Cumilla city around 8:00am yesterday.

The dead is Jilur Rahman Jilani, 42, of Chowdhury Bari Chouara in the Cumilla City Corporation area.

The victim was beaten, hacked and shot before being killed, said Komol Krishno Dhar, inspector (investigation) of Cumilla Sadar South Police Station.

According to the victim's family members, around six to seven miscreants attacked Jilur around 7:00am while he was returning home leaving his child at school.

As the miscreants were wearing helmets, none of the witnesses could identify them. Jilur sustained serious injuries during the attack and was rushed to Cumilla Medical College Hospital (CuMCH).

He breathed his last around 8:00am while undergoing treatment at the hospital.

No one was held and no case was filed in connection with this incident as of 8:14pm yesterday.

2 shot dead in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Two men were shot dead by unknown miscreants in Rangamati area of Waggya union in Rangamati's Kaptai upazila around 3:00am yesterday.

The dead are Suvasn Tanhangya, 45, of Rajostoli upazila, and Dhananjoy Tanhangya, 32, of Gorjonia Para.

Quoting locals, police said Subhash came to visit Dhananjay at the latter's house in Gorjonia village yesterday afternoon. The group of miscreants intruded into the house around 3:00am, and asked the duo to open their door.

As soon as they opened the door, the miscreants opened fire on them and fled the scene. The duo was killed on the spot.

Muhammad Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kaptai Police Station, said a police team recovered the bodies and sent those to Rangamati General Hospital morgue for autopsies.

No case was filed in connection with the incident as of 8:41pm yesterday.