

Token hunger strike, sit-in in city

Probe textbook scam, demand students



Students disgruntled by delay in publication of textbooks demonstrate in front of the NCTB office at Motijheel in the city yesterday. -- Star photo

**By Staff Correspondent**

Students observed a token hunger strike in the city yesterday to protest failure of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) to print and distribute textbooks for both Primary and Secondary level.

The token strike, organised by Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), Dhaka City Unit at Mukhtangan, was attended by general students, and BCU leaders and activists.

Earlier, students at a rally blamed the NCTB for not receiving the textbooks for the current academic year in time.

They also protested what they said massive corruption at the NCTB and demanded immediate solution to the textbook crisis.

Speakers also demanded formation of a body to probe the textbook scam, which has upset studies of about 2.5 crore students of Primary and Secondary levels across the country.

Meanwhile, another section of students took to the street yesterday to protest the delay in

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British Minister due Jan 14

By Staff Correspondent

Alan Johnson, British Minister for Competitiveness will arrive in Dhaka on January 14 on a three-day visit to Bangladesh. The British minister will inaugurate the fourth British Trade and Education Fair at Sheraton Hotel.

An MP of the Labour Party since 1997, Alan Johnson was also appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Trade and Industry in 1999.

**Nepalese FM arrives today**

Nepalese Foreign Minister Chakra Prasad Bastola arrives here today on a 4-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad is expected to receive him at the Zia International airport on his arrival at 4:35 pm.

Bastola will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Tejgaon office at 6 pm today and President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban at 10 am tomorrow.

During his stay here, he will also call on Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad on Tuesday, Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil on Wednesday, and meet FBCCI leaders on Wednesday.

Question papers elude DU examinees

By Staff Correspondent

About 150 examinees of Dhaka University's Bangla Department could not sit for two examinations of their honours final yesterday as those were suspended due to non-availability of question papers.

Campus sources said the Bangla honours final year exams for courses 309 and 310 were scheduled to begin at the Arts faculty at 9am yesterday. But as the question papers did not arrive in time, on-duty teachers tried to contact the Chairman of the Examination Committee Professor Anisuzzaman over phone, only to find that he was not home.

Their attempts to contact two other committee members Prof. ATM Nurur Rahman Khan and Dr Syed Mohammad Shahid also failed.

When there were no sign of the question papers even at 10am, the teachers suspended the exams.

At this, the already frustrated examinees came out of the exam hall and began to demonstrate in front of the office of Prof. Anisuzzaman, chanting slogans against him. They however stopped when teachers assured

them that the examinations would be held later under the same question papers.

Teachers of the university reacted sharply to the incident saying that it was the first of its kind in the history of the university.

The on-duty teachers later expressed deep resentment over the mismanagement of the Exam Committee, terming the incident as a "black chapter" for the university.

Guardians of some examinees also strongly criticised the authorities responsible for the incident and some demanded punitive steps against them.

"How can it be that the teachers responsible for the examination have forgotten about it," said an angry guardian.

Sources said Dr Anisuzzaman issued a notice to the department at about 12 noon expressing regret for the incident.

Despite repeated attempts, Dr Anisuzzaman could not be contacted for his comments.

Campus sources said that the dates of the suspended examinations would be announced later.

Goods-carrying transports won't ply from Jan 10

By Staff Correspondent

All goods-carrying transports would be off the roads across the country from January 10, if the government fails to rescind its ban on movement of trucks in the capital during daytime.

Addressing a press conference at a city hotel yesterday, truckers protested the recent government decision to ban movement of trucks in the capital between 8-00am and 8-00pm from January 10.

The Bangladesh Truck Owners Association, Truck Drivers Federation, Covered-Van Association and Transport Agency Owners Association jointly organised the press conference to call for suspension of the decision and settlement of the issue in consultation with transport leaders.

Reading out a written statement at the press conference, Roy Ramesh Chandra, the general secretary of Truck Drivers Federation, said daytime ban on truck movement would not ease traffic gridlock in the city rather it would have adverse effect on the

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Evicted hawkers trying to reoccupy pavements

By Staff Correspondent

As the city is returning to normalcy after the long Eid 'holidays', police and hawkers have again started playing cat and mouse in some of the busiest areas from where hawkers were evicted and unauthorized road-side shops removed.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) evicted hawkers and removed the shops from roads and pavements immediately after the Eid and deployed police in those areas.

But taking the advantage of absence of police, hawkers were seen trying to re-occupy parts of the roads and pavements at Nilkhet and Farmgate crossings yesterday.

Roads and pavements in busy areas like Gulistan crossing, Firmgate, Purana Paltan, Karwan Bazar, Hatirpool, Shapla Chattar, Nilkhet, New Market, Panthapath and Lalbagh were freed from hawkers.

Unauthorized shops and hawkers were also removed from roads around Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and BUET.

The eviction eased movement of pedestrians and vehicles to a large extent in those areas.

Yesterday, DCC suspended the eviction drive for two days and withdrew policemen from some of the areas as DMP could not provide DCC teams with police due to the Bista Ittema, said a DCC official.

Instead, patrol teams have been engaged, who make sorties occasionally.

As soon as the patrol teams leave the places, hawkers try to sit on the pavement with their goods.

When contacted, DMP Control Room said the number of policemen was less in the city as a huge force was deployed at the Biswa Ittema venue at Tongi. DMP has only 18,000 policemen, which is "far less than the requirement", the Control Room said.

DCC and DMO officials however hoped that they would be able to resume the eviction drive tomorrow (Tuesday).

Fatwa: Leave petitions for stay of HC judgement

By SC Correspondent

Two leave petitions seeking a stay on and challenging a High Court judgement on January 1 declaring all types of Fatwa illegal were filed before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday.

The petitions were filed by Mufti Mohammad Tayab, a teacher of Lalbagh Jamiyah Ashrafiyah Arabiah Madrassah and Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad, Chairman of Bangladesh Masjid Mission.

Their counsels submitted the petitions after the court's working hour was over. The petitions will be submitted today before the court.

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Turkey intercepts 146 illegal immigrants including Bangladeshis

ANKARA, Jan 7: Turkish security forces have intercepted 146 illegal immigrants in northwestern and western Turkey as they were preparing bids to sneak into Europe, the Anatolia news agency reported today, reports AFP.

In the northwestern province of Edirne bordering Greece, paramilitary troops rounded up 86 would-be immigrants who were planning to cross the border and then travel on to different European countries.

The group included Iraqis, Palestinians, Egyptians, Bangladeshis, Syrians, Afghans and Lebanese, the report said.

In the neighbouring province of Tekirdag, police found 21 people 20 Afghans and a Palestinian on

a truck which was about to board a ship bound for Italy from a port on the Marmara Sea.

In the western resort town of Cesme on the Aegean coast, five Iraqi nationals who had entered Turkey illegally were detained by police, Anatolia said.

Meanwhile, police in Istanbul detained 34 Afghan nationals in a raid on a flat in the Zeytinburnu district, in the city's European quarter.

Anatolia did not specify whether the group, which had entered Turkey illegally, was meaning to leave Istanbul and

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