

DU female dormitories

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Uddin Hall.
At dormitories for males, few students enjoying political influence get very good accommodation facilities while the rest have to share seats or stay on floors. Only student leaders' get single-seated rooms, they alleged.

Out of 14 halls only three are for females who constitute 40 percent of the 28,000 students of the university.
Every year, about 4,000 students including 2,000 females are admitted to the university. Most of them come from outside Dhaka.

A small number of female students reside with their relatives in the city. Some even stay at hotels with their fathers or at rented houses. The procedure for allotment of seats is lengthy while female students attached to the halls can not even enter the dormitories because of strict rules.

Non-resident students or 'outsiders' are not allowed to stay at hall. But a good number of 'outsiders' belonging to student organisations are residing at halls for male students, they alleged.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, a female student from Jessore said, "I have no relative in the city and no place to stay. I would not have come to study at Dhaka University had I any idea of the sufferings here."

The situation is worse in Shamsunnahar Hall and Rokya Hall.

Each of the dormitories have four big rooms and 16 students stay in each of the rooms where the space between beds is hardly one foot, the sources said.
The authorities at Shamsunnahar Hall have erected some tents on each floor at the Honours building in which students stay in very unhygienic conditions, even near bathrooms.

"I am staying in such an unhygienic condition because I have no choice", a student said.

When contacted Vice-Chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury said the accommodation problem will ease with completion of the two under-construction halls, one for male and the other for female students.

"The work is going on in full swing and may be completed in a couple of months," he said. Construction of two other halls, one for male and the other for female students, will start very soon, he said.

Seminar postponed

A seminar on Political Economy of Cancer scheduled for today at Dhaka Community Hospital here has been postponed due to unavoidable reasons.

The hospital authority in a press release said yesterday that the new date would be announced later.

Pak plane lands in UK after bomb scare

A Pakistani airliner landed in Britain yesterday after a bomb scare, police said in the northern city of Manchester.

"We can confirm there was a bomb warning concerning a Pakistani aircraft," a spokeswoman told Reuters.

"A plane landed at Manchester airport at nine o'clock yesterday morning. All passengers have been taken off safely and we are currently assessing the situation."

She declined to give any further details and would not say where the flight was heading to or from.

Lankan PM's Pak visit delayed

A last-minute change in plans will delay a visit to Pakistan by Sri Lanka Prime Minister Ranasinghe Wickremesinghe in a bid to save the tawing status of Buddha in Afghanistan, an aide said yesterday.

The Sri Lanka leader had planned to leave Saturday, but rescheduled after his meeting with Pakistan's military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf was put off one day, said Seelarathne Senarath, Wickremesinghe's press secretary.

Sri Lanka is seeking international support to persuade the Taliban rulers to stop the destruction of the ancient statues.

Senarath said the prime minister will ask Musharraf to convey to Afghanistan's Taliban rulers that Sri Lanka was willing to take the statues and preserve them. Pakistan is Afghanistan's southern neighbour and closest ally.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgama already has arrived in Islamabad for meetings with Pakistani leaders.

Hosts held

Nine countries Bangladesh, Japan, China, Pakistan, India, Scotland, Egypt, Malaysia and Ireland are taking part in two groups with top two teams of each group qualifying for the semifinals.

Three matches will take place today. Favourites Pakistan play China at 10 am, India meet Scotland at 2 pm and Egypt face Malaysia at 4 pm.

The BTV will show all the matches live. The BTV has rearranged its schedule and would air programmes from 9:45 am instead of 3 pm today, a BTV release said.

The salient features of the inaugural match between Bangladesh and Japan along with the opening ceremony will be aired at 11:15 am tomorrow, it added.

Hostages' hope

Thirteen people including four Indian security force personnel and five separatist guerrillas have been killed in violence in troubled Kashmir region yesterday, police said.

They said one person was killed and 15 others were wounded yesterday when suspected guerrillas threw a grenade in a crowded street in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Police said the grenade was aimed at a paramilitary patrol. "The grenade missed the intended target and exploded on a busy crossing. One civilian died on the spot and 15 others were wounded," a police official said.



Forty-six students of Baktarchar High School in Keraniganj began fast unto death in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday demanding permission to sit for the upcoming SSC examinations. They have not been allowed to sit for the exams due to alleged irregularities by the school authorities. They also demand exemplary punishment to the headmaster of the school for his role in this regard.

Assam asks Delhi to declare ceasefire against militants

India's insurgency-racked north eastern Assam state on Saturday urged the federal government to declare a ceasefire against rebel militant groups to pave the path for peace.

Assam chief minister Profulla Kumar Mahanta told reporters the state government would extend all cooperation to the federal government, if such a ceasefire was declared.

This is the first time the Assam state government, one of the largest in India's troubled northeast region, has sought such a ceasefire against militant outfits operating in the area.

"We are ready to welcome any attempts by the federal government that could bring about a permanent solution to the region's insurgency problem," the Assam chief minister said.

Mahanta said New Delhi should extend the ceasefire throughout the north eastern region, where five of the seven states are fighting against rebels.

Indian Home Minister Lal Kishan Advani said recently that New Delhi was "actively considering" a ceasefire against all guerrilla outfits in the northeastern region.

There are at least 30 rebel groups active in the region whose demands range from secession to greater autonomy.

More than 25,000 lives have been lost in the five-decade-old insurgency in the seven adjoining north eastern states since India's independence in 1947.

New Delhi's ceasefire plan has been generally welcomed by all seven state governments.

"We welcome the federal government's plan, but before things are finalised, all the states must be consulted," Tripura chief minister

Manik Sarkar said.

The NSCN (Isak-Muivah faction), a militant group in Nagaland state and also active in Manipur, is currently holding peace talks with the Indian government after entering into a ceasefire in August 1997.

Influential students' group and other voluntary organisations in the north eastern region has been pressing New Delhi to declare a ceasefire against all insurgent groups in the region.

"The federal government must demonstrate its sincerity in solving the region's insurgency problem through negotiations," said Apurba Bhattacharya, general secretary of the Assam Jatiyatadabi Yuba Chatra Parishad, a student organisation in Assam.

"The first step in that direction can be a unilateral ceasefire against all the rebels in the region," he added.

Leaflets seeking help

The authorities continued their efforts yesterday while the local political leadership was apparently seen not much active. CHT Affairs Minister Kalparanjan Chakma was staying back home for 'sickness'.

Chairman of CHT Refugee Tusk Force Committee Dipanker Talukder MP at a press briefing in the evening said, "We have appealed to the people through leaflets for cooperation to secure release of the hostages. Distribution of leaflets will continue tomorrow (Sunday)."

He said efforts for making contact with the abductors will continue.

He claimed that the hostages were in "reasonable" health, but could not say where they were held. He said contact with the abductors was maintained through tribal intermediaries. "Even today, we received information that they (hostages) were in good health", Dipanker said.

Gram Clough, Head of the Political Department of British High Commission and Mominullah Patwari, Director General of the Prime Minister's Secretariat, were also present at the press briefing. Kalparanjan, who used to brief

the press, was absent from the briefing for the second consecutive day yesterday despite his presence in Rangamati.

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Harun-ur-Rashid who visited the spot about two weeks back is expected to visit and hold meetings with the authorities at Rangamati and Gunipara tomorrow, defence sources said.

Local traders and tour operators said there has been a serious setback to their business as few tourists are visiting the scenic district since February 9 when the three foreigners were taken hostage.

Minister in Pak Kashmir govt arrested

Anti-corruption officials arrested a minister in the Pakistani Kashmir's government yesterday charging him with misusing his power to amass wealth, a senior official said.

Sardar Akhtar Rabbani, Minister for Power, was arrested by the military government's anti-corruption bureau for allegedly giving government jobs to his relatives and amassing wealth through corrupt practices, Basharat Sheikh, chief of the bureau in Kashmir told reporters.

He gave no other details. Rabbani, a member of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, is the first minister from Pakistani Kashmir to be charged and arrested for corruption.

Liaison body

Pakistani-controlled Kashmir, called Azad for free Kashmir, enjoys a special semi-autonomous status in this South Asian country of 140 million people.

While Pakistan's national and four provincial Parliaments were suspended following a bloodless military coup in October 1999, Kashmir's Parliament remained in tact. It continues to govern Pakistani Kashmir.

Benazir's Pakistan's People's Party is in power in Kashmir, a disputed region between Islamic Pakistan and Hindu-dominated India.

India controls two-thirds of Kashmir, where Islamic guerrillas are waging a bloody secessionist movement for its merger with Pakistan or complete independence. Pakistan rules the remaining one-third.

13 more killed in Kashmir violence

No militant group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack.

Earlier yesterday militants shot dead a policeman at Zakura crossing on the outskirts of Srinagar.

Three Indian security force personnel and three separatist militants were killed on Friday evening in a fierce gunbattle at Morra Khakha area of Rajouri district, some 450-km southwest of Srinagar, police said.

In another gunbattle Indian soldiers shot dead two militants in Anantnag district of south Kashmir on Friday night, police said.

Elsewhere three civilians, one of them a woman had been killed in separate shootings in the troubled region since Friday evening, police said.

Authorities said civilian and police casualties in Kashmir had risen since India suspended offensive operations in the troubled region last November.

Militants have killed 288 civilians since the ceasefire began compared with 202 killed in the same period a year ago. The number of police killed in militant attacks had risen to 46 from 26.

Nearly a dozen militant groups are fighting New Delhi's rule in Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim majority state. Most of the militant groups have rejected India's ceasefire and stepped up attacks on Indian security forces.

Three women commit suicide in city

Three women committed suicide in separate incidents in the city on Friday and Saturday.

Hamida Begum, 22, wife of Abdul Hamid of 599 Dhania in the city's Demra area allegedly committed suicide by pouring kerosene and setting herself on fire on Friday, hospital sources said.

Police said that the woman poured kerosene herself following an altercation over family matters. The mother of the victim told Demra police station yesterday that her daughter was killed by her husband's family.

Police filed an unnatural death case with Demra police station. Police said if the autopsy report proved that she had been killed then it would turn into murder case.

In another incident, Ayesha Begum, 22, wife of Shahidullah of Sarulia in city's Demra area allegedly committed suicide by taking poison at her residence, hospital sources said.

Raju, brother-in-law of the victim took her to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she died on Friday.

Her body was sent to the morgue for autopsy. In another incident, Monoara, 15, daughter of Golam Mostafa committed suicide by taking poison at her residence at Badda yesterday.

Monoara locked into a fight with her elder brother Noor Hossain at their house at Kha 55 near Alatusha High School at Badda in the city.

The victim locked herself into the bathroom and took poison. She was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition where the attending doctors declared her dead.

Her body was also sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Hindus celebrate festival of Holi in India

India sparked with colour on Saturday as Hindus celebrated the festival of Holi by showering friends and relatives with water and smearing them in coloured paint.

The festival heralds the end of the winter season in northern India and the advent of spring and is also called the "Festival of Colours". In the Indian capital, people from all walks of life were seen drenching friends and family with water-filled balloons or covering them in paint.

Police officials said the festival was celebrated peacefully all over India. In India's restive Kashmir, soldiers tightened security to prevent the possibility of militant attacks.

But back at the barracks, soldiers were seen dancing to the traditional beat of Indian drums in camps decked out in bright colours.

"It is unfortunate that we have to work even on such festival days," said Ram Prasad, an Indian soldier on duty, who was painted with blue and green colours.

Security officials said soldiers had been ordered not to drink any liquor while on duty.

The big difference in this year's Holi festivities was the introduction of "environmentally-friendly" colouring, made from herbal derivatives.

Synthetics normally used to colour the paints often contains harmful chemicals that can cause skin rashes or allergies.

Shops selling the herbal paints reportedly made brisk sales. The developers, the National Botanical Research Institute in the north Indian city of Lucknow, said they were happy with the public's response.

In some neighbourhoods, however, the festivities were subdued due to the recent earthquake in the western Indian state of Gujarat, which killed an estimated 25,000 people and rendered over a million others homeless.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, cabinet member two Home Minister Lal Kishan Advani and some of their other cabinet colleagues had announced they would not celebrate the festival as a mark of respect to the bereaved families.

Chief Whip's son

The driver drove the jeep into the Cantonment area while the Shikdar Police managed to halt Sadeq's vehicle at the gate.

The sources said the jeep drove near the residence of the Army Chief and the women sought shelter there. On information, the Officer-in-Charge of Gulshan thana came and brought the ladies to the police station.

"They wanted to file a complaint, but refrained following threats," a close associate of the Shikdar family said.

The family members of Shikdar apprehended that the group tried to "abduct them to ransom".

DHAKA TODAY Discussion meeting Jatiya Church Parishad will hold a discussion meeting on Jubilee and Third World debt. Venue: Ballroom of Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 3:00 pm.

WEATHER TODAY Rain forecast UNB, Dhaka Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions and the region of Faridpur, Noakhali, Comilla and Sylhet in next 12 hours till 6 pm today.

Khulna AL leader FROM PAGE 12 helping police in the surrender drama under the general amnesty declared by government, Kana Babu said.

বাংলাদেশ রপ্তানি প্রক্রিয়াকরণ এলাকা কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ সংক্ষিপ্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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