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PHOTO: SHEIKH MOHIUDDIN

Agitating students of Bangladesh Agriculture University uproot railway tracks (L) and carry away a student injured in police firing on the campus yesterday.

An amazing U-turn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has backed out from its earlier stance and said no decision was taken to rename Bangladesh Agriculture University (BAU).

The state-run BTV said last night Monday's cabinet meeting did not decide renaming of BAU as Mymensingh Agriculture University.

Meanwhile, scores of people were hurt in violent protests in Mymensingh following the report that the cabinet opted for the change of name. No official explanation was available justifying the change.

Interestingly, the official news agency BSS which had earlier reported the change of name, in a separate news item last night, said the cabinet on January 14 did not take any decision to change the name of BAU.

Despite repeated attempts, Education Minister Osman Faruq

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Decision to rename BAU sparks violent protest

100 including teachers hurt in police action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 100 students and a number of teachers were injured when police charged batons and fired rubber bullets yesterday to quell violent demonstrations protesting a government decision to change the name of the agriculture university at Mymensingh.

The agitated students, irrespective of party affiliation, went on rampage on the campus, ransacked the office of the Vice Chancellor (VC) and removed rail tracks snapping the link between Dhaka and northern parts of the country, our correspondent reported.

The Cabinet on Monday decided to rename the Bangladesh Agriculture University (BAU) as Mymensingh Agriculture University (MAU).

A number of senior teachers including Proctor Dr Nazrul Islam and Student Affairs Advisor Dr Anwarul Islam were injured while trying to restrain the angry students. The two along with 33 injured students were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Earlier on Monday night, the students of the univer-

sity took to streets, damaged motor vehicles, removed rail tracks and laid a siege to the residence of the VC soon after hearing the news about the Cabinet decision.

The agitated students also boycotted all academic activities for an indefinite period.

The students continued their violent protests on the campus till mid night Monday night.

The railway authorities restored the rail track immediately, allowing movement of train on the route till early morning yesterday.

Campus sources said yesterday's problem started at about 8 am when the agitating students went on rampage again on the campus. They damaged windows of buildings.

Police lobbed tear gas shells on students who removed the rail tracks again and advanced towards the VC's residence at around 11 am.

The students hurled brickbats at police who tried to restrain them from going towards the VC's residence. Police charged batons and fired rubber bullets on the

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Govt staff should be axed by 50 pc: Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Smarting under cash crunch, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said the government could easily run with three to four lakh employees instead of the current workforce of about 10 lakh.

"The size of the government should be cut by at least 50 per cent," Saifur said, hinting that he would go for a massive job shedding programme. "I have already ordered my secretary not to allow transfer of staff from different projects to the revenue budget."

"There is no option but to take some harsh measures to streamline the loss-making state-owned enterprises," the minister said. "But the government should go for some safety net programme like the golden handshake or offering bank loans to employees of the SOEs for self-employment."

Saifur was speaking at a discussion on the state of the economy organised by the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) at the Jatiya Press Club in the city.

The minister said he had to swallow harsh comments from the recent mission of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) because of many an inconsistent factor in the economy.

Despite everything, the country is still on track, Saifur however said. "I hope the IMF would extend necessary assistance and I am expecting US\$1.5 billion from it. But we have to take some bold steps like cutting the size of the government, reducing loss of the SOEs and stopping SOE financing through banks."

"Had our economy been on a sound and solid basis, I would not have care to listen to the World Bank or IMF," he said.

Citing just one example, Saifur said, "The IMF mentioned that the state-owned enterprises are incurring

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M Saifur Rahman

Biman staff protest transfer of official

UNB, Dhaka

Officials and employees of Bangladesh Biman yesterday staged demonstrations protesting transfer of an official.

The Dhaka sales office of the national flag carrier at Motijheel came to a standstill in the afternoon following the demonstration protesting the transfer of an officer to Sales and Marketing Department from Organisation and Method Section.

Witnesses said the protesters gheraoed Dhaka District General Manager Jannur Ahmed alleging that the transfer was done violating service rule.

The agitated employees, however, withdrew their gherao following assurance from the GM of taking the matter to the higher authorities.

A Biman official preferring ano-

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Move for 7-member Appellate Divn to speed up trials

ZAYADUL AHSAN

The penultimate step to restructure the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court by drafting two more judges into the existing five-member body has been taken to speed up trials.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday approved a proposal to expand the Appellate Division and the file would be sent to the president today for his final seal of approval, official sources said.

She also approved appointment of KM Hasan, the senior most justice, to the Appellate Division to fill up the post lying vacant following the recent retirement of justice Golam Rabbani.

Sources said once the seven-member Appellate Division is created, it would be possible to constitute more benches to speed up trials.

Currently, over 3500 cases are pending with the Appellate Division that has only one bench.

According to Article 94(2) of the constitution, only the president has the power to decide the number of justices of the Appellate Division and appoint them. But under Article 48 of the constitution, the president has to

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Autopsy report says wife of Gazipur ADC killed herself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kamrunessa Islam, wife of Sirajul Islam, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Land), Gazipur, apparently committed suicide, according to the report of the autopsy carried out at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The body of Kamrunessa Islam, 35, was found hanging from a ceiling fan with a scarf tied around her neck at her North Shajahanpur residence on Monday morning.

Sources said Sirajul Islam along with his brother-in-law ATM Harun was at the Sonali bank at Shajahanpur when he was informed over his mobile phone about his wife's death.

Both Sirajul and Harun immediately rushed to the spot and found

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Armyman made IG (prisons) once again

NAZRUL ISLAM

Sidestepping the service rules of the Prison Directorate, the government once again appointed an army officer to the topmost post of the jail administration, which stirred fresh resentment among jail officials.

In an official order on Monday, the government appointed Brigadier General Zillur Rahman inspector general (IG) (prisons) on deputation.

"The appointment triggered resentment among the jail officials and hampered the implementation of programmes taken to speed up the jail reforms," a senior official of the Dhaka Central Jail told The Daily Star last night.

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Gynaes get the chop

SPORTS REPORTER

Wisdom finally dawned on the Chittagong Zilla Krira Sangstha yesterday as it excluded gynaecologists from the 8-member medical team for the Chittagong leg of the Coca-Cola Series.

The organisers of the two international matches in the port city, threw all into a flat spin only the other day by including three lady

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INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

When Tony plays tennis

Column: Byline
M J Akbar

Culture 16

Theatre: Bridging gaps

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 16		5-33 pm
Jan 17	6-44 am	

Prayer Timings

Jan 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-40	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-37	5-42
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: STAR

Cancer survivors attend the press conference organised at the Jatiya Press Club by ASHIC Foundation to mark the International Childhood Cancer Day yesterday.

6000 children under five die of blood cancer a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 6000 children under five die of blood cancer without any treatment a year in the country, as revealed at a press conference yesterday.

The country has only two centres for treatment of cancer in children - one at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) and the other at Dhaka Shishu Hospital.

The press conference, organised by ASHIC (A Shelter for Helpless Ill Children) Foundation to mark the International Childhood Cancer Day yesterday, said timely detection and proper diagnosis can cure 70 out of 100 blood cancer patients.

More than 50 children who have survived blood cancer were present at the press conference.

"Unfortunately, more than 80 per cent of children suffering from blood cancer (leukaemia) are either unaware of the illness or misdiagnosed due to lack of detection facilities," said Salma Choudhury, chairman of ASHIC, established in 1994.

"We are here to tell the world about the agonies of sufferers. Parents and children equally suffer mental torture, but there is no arrangement unlike in the West to ease their pains," added Salma.

Only five per cent of the childhood blood cancer cases in

Bangladesh avail themselves of the facilities at the Department of Paediatric Oncology at BSMMUH with only 13 beds, said Prof. MA Mannan.

Prof. Mannan said, "The country has only a handful of experts who can treat children suffering from cancer. There is no trained nurse and paramedic who can deal with the problems."

"In terms of quality, the treatment we offer here is no less than what is offered in the West, but the problem is most people do not get the costly chemotherapy drugs from our hospitals. The cost of drugs is

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Final Test at Chittagong today

HASAN MASOOD from Chittagong

The second and final Test of the Coca-Cola Series between Bangladesh and Pakistan begins at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong today amidst little hope and aspiration for the home team.

Pakistan have already established their supremacy over the Test newcomers, winning the first Test in Dhaka by an innings and 178 runs.

The five-day match commences at 9:45 am. Bangladesh Television and Ekushey Television will be

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