

The Daily Star

COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XII No. 223

DHAKA SUNDAY DECEMBER 22, 2002

Dawn fog blurs city vision

Airport morning schedule thrown haywire, trains delayed by hours

STAR REPORT

Dense fog descended on the country early on Saturday, holding up flights, delaying trains, launches and making driving perilous.

Visibility was so poor that landing and take off of all scheduled flights were delayed and movement of road and river transports and trains was also badly affected.

In the capital, the sun could be seen at about 10 am. But in the northern region of the country, it was not seen till about 1 pm, the meteorological office said.

"This situation will continue for the next two or three days although density of the fog will decline," said Akram Hossain, director of the meteorological department.

He said the 'unusual fog is the result of sudden rise of vapour in the air' and such a situation has been prevailing in the region, including India and Pakistan, for the last few days.

When the fog disappears, Akram Hossain said, the 'belated winter' would set in all over the country. "Two simultaneous cyclones in this region already delayed the advent of winter and the fog is now adding to the delay."

Temperature in the country is now 2 to 6 degree Celsius above the normal at this time. But there would be a sudden fall in temperature once the fog disappears in the next two or three days, he said.

Meanwhile, arrival and departure schedules of all domestic and international flights to and from Dhaka were revised yesterday due to dense fog.

All the 34 international flights were delayed for several hours as none

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

A poster near the entrance of the Dhaka Medical College spells out a central student union call for indefinite strike in demand for resignation of the principal and two teachers.

Student leaders damage DMC office, call strike

Union out to skim money out of test fee again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Dhaka Medical College Students Union (DMCSU) yesterday damaged chairs and plant tubs at the college administration building for not increasing price of application forms for admission test.

They also called an indefinite student strike at the college from today demanding an increase in price of application forms for MBBS admission test from Tk 20 to Tk 120. They also demanded immediate resignation of the college principal.

The agitating leaders put the rooms of the principal and two other teachers under lock and key at around 1:00pm yesterday.

Sources said the leaders of DMCSU, mostly activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), have been demanding of the authorities to sell admission forms at Tk 120 each of which the union would pocket Tk 100 as 'prospectus fee' like the previous year.

But the authorities ignored the union demand and started selling the forms at Tk 20.

Yesterday morning, JCD activists of the Dhaka Medical College (DMC) got together on the college campus under the banner of 'Conscious Students' and at around 12:30pm, they forced the employees from selling admission forms.

They damaged a few chairs and

plant tubs on the campus and locked up the rooms of Principle Professor Tofail Ahmed, acting Chairman of the forensic department Associate Professor Mizanur Rahman and Assistant Professor Mostak Rahim Swapan.

The students led by Dr Javed Ahmed, vice-president of the DMCSU, called an indefinite strike demanding resignation of the three teachers including the principal.

They also alleged corruption against the principal and the other two teachers.

A large number of police were deployed on the campus and a tense situation was prevailing there till filing of this report last night at 9:00pm.

Never-ending wait for docs

RAFIQ HASAN

Many patients do not see a doctor all day long while the nurses and ward boys hardly respond to emergency calls at the Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH).

Apart from negligence by the doctors and nurses, the hospital tends to more patients than it can handle, resulting in low standard of treatment and services.

A performance audit report by the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) Office portrays such a gloomy picture of the hospital.

More than 300 patients regularly stay on the floor of the hospital. The 1,000-seat hospital houses 1,339 patients on an average.

The report observed that the patients do not get a specialist doctor during emergencies even after repeated requests. The

Many CMCH patients do not see them the whole day, nurses ignore emergency calls, says CAG report

nurses, ward boys and ayas (female attendants) hardly respond to a patient's call.

More than 11 per cent of the patients surveyed note that the ward boys and ayas are very cooperative only when they are paid hand-

somely. Otherwise, they are not available during treatment. But they show up only when patients leave the hospital to get tips for their 'service'.

Patients sometimes have to have their own bed sheets to stay on the floor, which the nurses and hospital staffs rent out.

No less than 25 per cent of the patients face problems in getting admission to the CMCH. Nineteen per cent of the admitted patients told the auditors that they had to lobby for admission.

Once admitted, patients have to struggle for getting bed, bed sheets, pillow and mosquito nets. Ninety-eight patients of the 140 surveyed said although they bed sheets they

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

BB leash squeezes directors' loans

INAM AHMED

Following the central bank's efforts to control insider lending, private bank directors' loans from their own banks have decreased by 41 per cent in six months since December 2001.

According to Bangladesh Bank (BB) statistics, the total amount of loans taken by the directors from their own banks stood at Tk 380.36 crore on June 30, 2002.

It is about Tk 275 crore less than the Tk 655 crore loans recorded on December 31, 2001.

Statistics shows that defaulted loans of the bank directors also decreased by about 77 per cent

during the time. From Tk 57 crore of defaulted loans on December 31, 2001, the amount went down to Tk 12.82 crore on June 30, 2002.

"This is a positive development," said a central bank official. "We are trying to limit the exposure of the banks to insider loans. We first took up the issue in 1999 when it was found that directors took huge loans from their own banks, sometimes under fictitious accounts, exposing the institutions to financial dangers. Now, the things are slowly getting under control."

In 1999, the Bangladesh Bank issued a circular restricting loans of directors from their own banks to 50

per cent of their share, following which directors adjusted their excess loans.

Later, another attempt was taken to restrict directors' loans to 25 per cent of their shares, but it did not succeed.

Meantime, statistics show that the IFIC Bank has the highest of Tk 207.47 crore in directors' loans, most given to two big groups.

National Bank Ltd. has Tk 56.06 crore in directors' loans with Tk 6.75 crore in defaulted amount, NCCBL has Tk 12.68 crore, Islami Bank has Tk 39.31 crore with Tk 8 lakh in defaulted amount, Southeast Bank

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3