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Protest over fellow arrest

DMCH interns go on indefinite strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 100 intern doctors at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) went on an indefinite strike yesterday, protesting arrest of a fellow doctor and demanding withdrawal of the 'false' case against the vice-president (VP) of the now-disbanded DMC students union.

The strike called yesterday morning by the interns coincided with that of the Dhaka Medical College Students Union (DMCSU), virtually crippling healthcare ser-

vices at the hospital.

The interns demanded immediate release of Dr Soleiman who was arrested on the college campus for allegedly leading a group of students who vandalised the office of the DMC principal and college premises Saturday.

They also demanded withdrawal of the case against Dr Javed Ahmed, VP of the DMCSU, who has been absconding since the warrant of arrest issued after Saturday's incident that left some teachers' rooms in damage.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) in a press release said it suspended membership of Dr Javed. The BMA has also formed a five-member committee to investigate the allegation of ransacking.

The strike rendered the patients in most of the hospital wards helpless. The most affected are the ward No. 30 (neurosurgery) and the ward No. 31 (casualty).

Nurses and ward boys were taking care of the patients. In some cases, registrars and resident

surgeons were attending to the patients especially at the emergency ward yesterday.

"We have no doctor here... nurses are doing their best," said Yahid, a thigh-injury patient in the ward No. 31.

Usually, the interns on roster duty take over healthcare responsibilities after senior doctors and teachers leave the hospital after office hours.

The college campus looked deserted yesterday due to the union

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A toddler snuggles against its sister to guard against chill in the city yesterday, with winter announcing its sure presence with cold climes and dense fog.

City feels the chill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People have started experiencing the bite of cold for the first time this year in the city, owing to the sudden fall of mercury in the last two days.

According to the meteorological office, the lowest temperature recorded in the city yesterday was 15.6 degrees Celsius, and it was 20 and 17 degrees Celsius on December 20 and 21. The meteorological office has forecasted that the temperature will fall slightly today.

An official of the meteorological office, however, said that the fall of temperature is not unusual, as the normal temperature should be around 13.6 degrees Celsius in the Dhaka City during this time.

Meanwhile, a cold spell accompanied by Himalayan wind has hit the northern districts, causing

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Total ban on two-stroke

Half-baked plan to up commuters' woe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the two-stroke three-wheelers will be banned a week from now, city commuters are set to face severe transport crisis thanks to the haphazard planning.

While some 18,000 two-strokes will have been withdrawn from the streets, the authorities have allowed only 5,000 four-stroke ones, leaving a huge gap. On the other hand, the importers are also unable to deliver vehicles on time, compounding the

crisis.

Uttara Motors Ltd., the major importer of CNG-run three-wheelers, is now unable to deliver vehicles even though it received full payments from customers, alleged various buyers. Uttara is also not importing meters violating a government directive.

However, CNG three-wheelers imported by Uttara are now available at higher prices at different auto-shops. Uttara takes Tk 157,500 for each vehicle. But the same are selling at between Tk 225,000 and Tk 230,000 at the shops. These auto-shops claim that they can readily supply as many vehicles as needed.

Several customers were found yesterday at the head office of the Uttara Motors to inquire about the delivery of three-wheelers. John of Sabujbagh said he had placed an order three months ago and paid Tk 40,000 in advance. He even paid the rest Tk117,500 in the first week of this month. But he is yet to get the vehicle.

Tahura Jahan of Segunbagicha who paid Uttara last week also does

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Intern docs in Sylhet start work stoppage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Intern doctors at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital went on an indefinite strike yesterday.

They took the decision following a brawl with attendants of patients after a road accident victim died due to alleged negligence in treatment.

They also held a rally on the hospital premises and handed over a memorandum to the hospital's acting director demanding punishment of those responsible for "physically assaulting an intern doctor".

Some victims of a road accident were taken to the hospital on Sunday night. One of them, Suruj Ali, a former UP member, died.

Witnesses said the interns delayed in starting treatment of the injured, even after repeated requests by their families and relatives.

This agitated the victims' attendants. Heated exchange of words ensued and at one stage, Suruj Ali's son Helal slapped an intern doctor.

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Saleem Samad gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court Division yesterday granted a three-month ad interim bail to Saleem Samad.

The court also issued a rule upon the government to show cause why the freelance journalist should not be granted regular bail.

Besides, the division bench of Justice Hamidul Haq and Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury directed officials concerned to send the order to the jail authorities by a special messenger.

The judges made the directive as Saleem's lawyers pointed out that NGO activist Pricilla Raj was released on December 22, four days after the High Court had granted her bail, because the order did not reach the jail authorities in time.

However, Saleem was not released yesterday as the Dhaka Central Jail authorities did not receive the bail order. His lawyers and family members expect he would be set free today.

Saleem was arrested on November 29 on charges of helping two foreign journalists make a report, allegedly to negatively portray Bangladesh.

Later, sedition charge was brought against Saleem, the two foreign journalists and their interpreter Pricilla Raj.

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20 more NGOs quit ADAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty more NGOs have quit the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) yesterday, accusing its leaders of using the apex forum of NGOs for their 'vested interest'.

With the new quitters, the number of members leaving ADAB rose to 45. The NGOs which quit ADAB yesterday are Sangathita Gram Unnyan Karmasuchi, AVRDB, CDS (Thakurgaon), Palli Unnyan Samity, Darial Union Janokalyan Sangstha, Grameen Unnayan and Dairidra Bimochon Sangstha, Gram Unnayan Mohila Samity, SDS (Shariatpur), Palok (Kushtia), SRS, Alor Disha Kalyan Sangstha, Alo (Kushtia), FAIR (Kushtia), DAC, Mohua Mohila Unnyan Sangstha, Drisht, BVDP, Masses and Karmajibi Sangstha.

Earlier, 25 leading NGOs including BRAC quit ADAB for what they said controversial decisions, unconstitutional steps and undemocratic practices of the present leadership of the association, which has tarnished its image as a non-partisan organisation.

A statement by the National NGO Coordination Committee yesterday said the chiefs of the quitting NGOs accused the ADAB leaders of using the forum for personal gains.

They criticised ADAB's present executive committee leaders for their 'undemocratic attitude, stubbornness and lack of transparency' that deviated the organisation from its objectives and goals. "ADAB has lost its acceptability due to the stubbornness of its leadership," the statement said.

Earlier, chief executives of 25 NGOs resigned from the ADAB on December 9. They are Fazle Hasan Abed of BRAC, Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori, Kamaluddin Akbar of RDRS, Rasheda K Chowdhury of CAMPE, Kazi Rafiqul Alam of Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Abdul Hamid Bhuiyan of SSS, among others.

"ADAB is serving the narrow interests of a few individuals and organisations at the cost of the collective interest of the NGO community," an earlier statement of the resigning leaders said.

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Khaleda in Beijing, official talks today

UNB, Beijing

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia arrived here yesterday to begin a five-day official visit to China with a comprehensive agenda of discussions with Chinese leaders.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yin received the prime minister at the Beijing Capital Airport with bouquet as she arrived there in the afternoon.

Bangladesh Ambassador to China Iftikharul Karim, Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hu Qianwen and other senior officials of the two countries were present in the airport ceremonies.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will be accorded formal reception by Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji today in the North Hall of the Great Hall of the People.

The two prime ministers will hold official talks today in the East Hall of the Great Hall after the ceremony, covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations in a new perspective.

Earlier at noon yesterday, Prime

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