

DMCH interns call off strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The striking intern doctors at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) joined duty from yesterday, ending a two-day non-stop work abstention.

They decided to join work following a meeting of the leaders of the intern doctors late Tuesday.

More than one hundred intern doctors assigned to three main departments -- surgery, obstetric and gynaecology and medicine -- abstained from work following the arrest of Dr Soleiman for his alleged involvement in the ransacking of a number of teachers' rooms on Saturday.

No intern doctors were seen on duty in the hospital on Tuesday although the strike was called off. Due to the Christmas holiday yesterday, few interns were seen at the hospital.

Meantime, DMC students who had earlier announced class boycott to protest a case filed against Dr Javed Ahmed, vice-president of the DMCH students union, returned to classes from Tuesday. The case was filed following the ransacking.

DMC student union leaders demanded that they be allowed to sell their 'prospectus' for Tk 100 to each student seeking admission. But the college authorities refused to comply with their illegal demand, resulting in the violent protest on Saturday.

The intern doctors, however, threatened to go on fresh strike if the case against Dr Javed was not withdrawn immediately. The DMCH director has assured the interns on Tuesday that he would look into the matter.

7 containers with chemicals fall into river

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Seven containers with imported chemicals fell in the river Karnaphuli in Chittagong port area yesterday morning.

The containers slipped off while being loaded on a barge from a vessel -- QC Lark. The vessel arrived at Jetty-7 from Kelang port in Malaysia at about 9:30 am.

The containers were loaded with urea formaldehydes, imported by KAFCO as raw materials for urea fertiliser. The barge was to carry those to KAFCO factory on the other bank of the Karnaphuli.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) took steps to salvage the containers immediately but it failed as those are too heavy, each weighing around 29 tons. The CPA then asked for naval assistance in this regard.

Sources said navy divers are likely to salvage the containers today.

When contacted, the authorities said there is no possibility of leakage of chemicals that might pollute the river water.

Meanwhile, shipping minister Akbar Hossain visited the spot and had a meeting with the CPA officials about immediate salvage of the containers.

Young man beaten to death in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A young man was beaten to death by his rivals at Barasat village under Terokhada upazila on Tuesday night.

The dead was identified as Abed Ali, 28 of the same village. Police said the murder was a sequence to a previous enmity over land dispute.

A case was filed with Tarokhada police station yesterday evening.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 26		5-19 pm
Dec 27	6-39 am	

Prayer Timings		
Dec 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-30	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-24	5-30
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Two boys stand hand in hand to form a human chain near the Shaheed Anwara Park in the city yesterday to save the open space from encroachment and abuse while the man in the background makes a mockery of their concern.

PHOTO: STAR

Out to get it green

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the authorities continue keeping their eyes closed to the woes of the Shaheed Anwara Park at Farm Gate, some young boys under the banner 'Projonmer Chetona' (spirit of the generation) yesterday formed a human chain near the urine-drenched open space in a bid to save it.

Members of the group demanded of the authorities to put an end to encroachment, use of the park as a toilet and wandering by floating sex workers, drug peddlers and addicts. They also demanded immediate measures to clear the rubbish, reopen the fountain and plant trees all around the park.

Negligence by the authorities and a lack of minimum maintenance has made the park a pity. The dying trees, shabby grass, damaged benches and broken pathways have made the park an unbearable sight.

The park happened to be a playground for children even during the mid-80s. These days, children are hardly seen playing in the park.

Rather, a group of truants can be seen most of the time.

The park has become a warehouse with ample room for goods. Stockpiles of sugarcane, pineapples, vegetables and other wares are always seen on its surroundings. Hawkers sit on the entrances of the park with their shoddy goods.

The ruined structure that was 'made to be a fountain' never spouted a drop of water. The accumulated rainwater in it is now full of garbage and algae. Floating people have occupied areas in the park. Some of them have built makeshift houses with plastic covers. But mostly the park umbrellas have proven to be a better roof for them.

Police occasionally come to evict them whenever instructed by the highest authorities.

As dusk descends, Shaheed Anwara Park gets abuzz with anti-social activities. People do not dare to enter running the risk of being mugged. Selling and doing drugs inside the park are the usual business, according to the local people.

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Nat'l arsenic mitigation plan afoot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time, the government is preparing a national plan to combat arsenic contamination of groundwater in the country.

Sources said the national plan is aimed at 'integrating' the efforts of donor agencies and other organisations in this field and resolving the arsenic problem in a 'well-coordinated way'.

A group of experts and officials at the Local Government, Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives Ministry has been formulating the 'umbrella plan' and it is likely to be finalised within a fortnight.

The sources mentioned that so far donors prepared schemes for mitigating arsenic contamination and

the government acted on the basis of those. But this time the government itself is formulating the plan.

The need for a national plan was felt as isolated efforts by donors and other organisations in certain areas of the country to fight arsenic contamination have not proved so effective. The UNICEF, DANIDA, UNDP, Swiss Development Corporation and the World Bank have been working in this field separately.

In such a situation, the LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan initiated formulation of the umbrella plan, sources pointed out.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Mannan Bhuiyan said, a 'concept paper' has already been pre-

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New lease of life for top guns irks those below

Only 18 secretaries regular, 22 on contracts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Recent government decision to extend tenure of some contractual appointees in key bureaucratic posts has sparked off serious discontentment in the administration.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui and acting Energy Division secretary SM Shamsul Alam have both been given extensions on their contracts.

According to sources, files of four more secretaries now lie at the Prime Minister's Office, seeking approval for extension of their contracts.

They are Water Resources Secretary Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury, Establishment

Secretary Anwarul Bar Chowdhury, Local Government Division Secretary AYBI Siddiqi and Primary and Mass Education Division Secretary Dr Tahmina Hossain. Siddiqi and Chowdhury's contracts expire on December 31.

According to official figures, out of 54 secretaries in the administration, 22 are on contractual appointment and 14 are additional secretaries in charge of different ministries and divisions. Only 18 secretaries are regular.

There used to be a ten per cent ceiling when the president had control over contractual appointment. However, the system was abolished immediately after the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) came to power.

Officials said the contractual appointments have created a promotion backlog in the civil service, forcing many additional secretaries to go into retirement without getting promotion to the post of secretary.

The government in one hand is not giving promotion to thousands of officials at the middle and junior levels, who have been in queue for years, it has continued to give contractual appointments on the other, sources said.

Secretariat sources said contractual appointments to Rural Development and Cooperatives Division Secretary Dhiraj Kumar Nath, Communications Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat, Home Secretary

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Police SI shot dead in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Unidentified assailants gunned down a police sub-inspector (SI) at village Kanayadaha under Harinakundu upazila in Jhenidah district Tuesday night.

The victim was identified as SI Ilyias Hossain, 33, of Jhowdia police camp in Kushtia. Police recovered his body from a beel in Kanayadaha yesterday morning. The victim's hands and legs were tied and his body bore marks of injury.

Police said SI Ilyias was returning to his camp at around 7:30pm on Tuesday after giving testimony in a murder case at Kushtia Magistrate's Court when he was ambushed and abducted at gunpoint by unknown men who took him to the beel area and killed him. The killers also took away his motorcycle, revolver and walkie-talkie.

The cause behind the murder could not be known immediately. Md Shamsuddin, Superintendent of Police (SP) of Kushtia, SP of Jhenidah and Kushtia Sadar UNO Md. Abdus Sobhan visited the spot.

The SP of Kushtia said a vigorous investigation by the joint forces was underway to arrest the murderers of the police officer.

Another source hinted that the outlawed Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) might have carried out the murder.

Autopsy of the dead body was done yesterday noon and then sent to his home at Gangni in Meherpur.

No one was arrested till filing of this report yesterday evening.

Road accidents kill 7 in Ctg, Sirajganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven people were killed and 30 others injured in road accidents in Sirajganj and Chittagong yesterday.

Of them, three were killed in Sirajganj and the rest four in Chittagong.

Our correspondent from Sirajganj reports: At least three people were killed and 30 others injured, 17 of them seriously, in road accident on the Dhaka-Bogra highway here yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place when a Dhaka bound bus collided head on with a Bogra bound bus near Hatikumrul Samabaya petrol pump at around 11:30 am.

One passenger aged 40 died on the spot, while two others on way to hospital. Identity of the dead could not be known.

Of the injured, 14 were admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital.

Police seized both the buses, but divers and helpers managed to flee.

In Chittagong, four people, including a woman, were killed in separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

According to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, Swapan Hawladar, 30, died on the spot as the tempo carrying him over turned near the railway station in the city at about 1:30 pm. He came from Betagi in Barguna district.

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PRAYERS FOR PEACE



PHOTO: AFP

A little girl says her Christmas prayers at the feet of the statue of crucified Jesus at a Christian cemetery in the city yesterday.

20 more listed criminals put behind the bars

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty listed criminals and 71 others were arrested in the last 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

Within the period, the joint forces of army, paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles and police personnel confiscated 26 firearms plus 15 rounds of ammunition.

So far, 10,077 people, 2,234 of them listed criminals, have been nabbed since the Operation Clean Heart began on October 17.

Also, the army-led drive has rounded up 1,845 firearms and 29,012 rounds of ammunition.

In the capital on Tuesday, a retired havildar was arrested on suspected involvement with criminals and extortionists.

ATM Yaqub Ali, who, according to police, has swindled a huge amount of money out of a project in

the city's Bhashantek area, was later handed to Kafrul police.

Shown arrested under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), he was produced before a magistrate's court yesterday before being sent to jail.

In Khulna, two brothers-in-law of Ershad Shikder, who is in death row, were arrested Tuesday night, reports our correspondent.

Khairul Alam Nasim and Kamrul Alam Mintu, elder brothers of Ershad's wife Sanjida Nahar Shobha, are also believed to be close associate of Ward Commissioner Asaduzzaman Litu, charge-sheeted prime accused in the journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case.

The joint forces also arrested a Jubo League leader. Sheikh Faruque

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Christmas celebrated

UNB, Dhaka

Christmas, the biggest religious festival of the Christian community, was celebrated in the country as elsewhere in the world yesterday.

Members of the Christian community organised various programmes to celebrate Christmas, marking the birth of Jesus Christ.

The day was a public holiday. The day's main programmes were decoration of Xmas trees at houses and special prayers at churches.

Besides, Christian community organised feasts, at houses and churches and distributed warm clothes among the destitutes in some places.

City's luxurious hotels including five-star ones arranged special programmes for all offering food and other packages for families and children.

'Santa Claus' also distributed gifts among the children.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

CID to seek fresh remand for monk's alleged killer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Alaich Mohammad, who confessed to involvement in the killing of Buddhist monk Gyanojyoti Mohathero, was sent to jail custody upon expiry of a three-day remand yesterday.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in charge of the Buddhist murder case will produce him before the court today to seek a second round of remand.

The cadre of the Aziz Bahini made the confession at a Chittagong metropolitan magistrate's court, gave details about the murder and revealed the names of those involved in it.

He said Putul Barua had a hand in the murder.

She is a teacher at the Hingala Warapuyan Buddha Bihar (a temple-cum-orphanage) in Rauzan where Gyanojyoti was killed on the night of April 21.

Alaich identified Azizul Haq, the linchpin of the Aziz Bahini, and the female teacher of the monastery as masterminds. The rest of the gang members, according to Alaich, are Nurul Islam, Manik, Zahir and Gias.

Alaich got Tk 400 and Zahir, Manik and Gias Tk 500 each before they fled the scene that night. They were told to contact Azizul later for the rest of the money.

Three days later, they went to the

residence of a top BNP leader in the city, who now holds a top position in the government, to get their money from Azizul, he alleged.

Alaich told some reporters at the office of the Detective Branch (DB) of Police Tuesday that Azizul flew to Dubai before they met him.

After the murder, Azizul contacted the leader who was elected MP several times and his brother, he told the reporters.

Detectives arrested Alaich in possession of an AK-47 assault rifle loaded with 13 bullets in the City Gate area at Pahartoli at around 6:00pm Saturday.

Police produced him before the SEE PAGE 11 COL 1