

Patients suffer as interns go on strike at RMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Interns started an indefinite strike at Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) yesterday to press their five-point demand including security of doctors and other staff inside the hospital and restriction on entry of visitors and patients' attendants.

A large percentage of the interns belong to Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS), student fronts of ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, sources claimed.

They called the strike after police allegedly failed to arrest the attackers on an intern. They claimed that the authorities failed to ensure security at the hospital.

They had virtually stopped work Saturday noon after attendants of a patient beat up intern doctor Amanullah Chowdhury.

Over 100 patients left the hospital till yesterday noon as the strike hampered medicare activities.

The agitating interns demonstrated on the hospital compound from morning to noon yesterday and forced many doctors including Registrars and Indoor Medical Officers to leave the hospital.

At around 12pm yesterday, they, for the first time in the hospital's history, put the emergency ward under lock and key for two hours, forcing out all on duty doctors and staff.

They also threatened working doctors at most of the 30 wards and forced many of them out of the hospital.

JCD leader Dr Muktadir Hossain Mridha Subho, ICS leader Dr Nazmul Arefin and Dr Abdul Matin addressed a rally held in front of the RMCH Director's office after a procession on the campus yesterday to press their demands.

Their demands include police vigilance at emergency wards, fixed visiting hours, limiting patients' attendants to two and introduction of pass for attendants.

The interns, however, formed an 'emergency squad' to 'manage urgent situations', but threatened that it will not work if their main demand for arrest of the attackers on Amanullah is not met by 10 am today.

A group of doctors, however, expressed solidarity with the interns. Led by Dr Ratan of Ward No. 14, Dr Fazlu of ward no. 13, Dr Sharif of Ward No. 5 and Dr Nayan of ward No. 2, they submitted a written representation to Rajshahi unit of Bangladesh Medical Association expressing their solidarity.

Dr Amanullah Kabir Chowdhury was beaten on Saturday by a gang

of ten when he was coming out of Ward no. 6, police said earlier.

Amanullah had a quarrel with attendants of patient Rawshan Ara. The attendants alleged that he responded late to her call, made as she felt problems due to on-going wall repair work in the ward.

Sources said that the attendants had requested Amanullah to take action to solve the problem. He asked them to shift the patient to another ward. A feud then ensued.

Senior doctors, officials and police rushed to the scene and brought the situations under control.

Within minutes, the interns gathered and agitated in front of the RMCH Director's office and submitted to him a memorandum demanding arrest of the attackers.

Amanullah filed a case in this regard with Rajpara police station, accusing ten people, naming three of them, police said.



Tributes to an educationist

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Nilphamari*

Rich tributes were paid to Amina Begum, a pioneer of female education in the district and a renowned headmistress of Nilphamari Government Girls' High School, at a civic condolence meeting held at the poura auditorium here on Saturday.

The memorial meeting was presided over by noted educationist Satish Chandra Barman.

While addressing, the speakers recalled with gratitude Amina Begum's role spreading the light of female education in the district in mid-40s till 1975. They said she would remain alive in memory of her beloved students and the people alike for her contributions in promoting female education in the area. They urged the new generation, specially the women-folk to follow her teachings and philosophy in their lives.

Among others, Nilphamari Bar Association president advocate Azizul Hasan, former public prosecutor (PP), Md Mahbubur Rahman, Nilphamari Women's College principal Khairat Hossain, former principal of the college and also a former student of the deceased, Farida Begum, Nilphamari municipality chairman Dewan Kamal Ahmed, acting headmistress of Nilphamari Government Girls' High School Dilruba Begum and the eldest son of Amina Begum, Asaduzzaman Noor MP, a renowned cultural personality-cum-politician.

Her husband late Abu Nazem Mohammad Ali was also a left-leaning politician, cultural personality and renowned educationist in the district.

Kaptai plant's power generation falls

Lake water level lowest in 10 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

Water level of Kaptai lake is now the lowest in 10 years due to a drought-like situation in the hills and scorching heat, reducing power generation by the hydroelectric plant and making its operation risky. Power generation by three units was 130 mw on Saturday against 150mw earlier as water level came down to 70.24 MSL (Mean Sea Level) at the dam point. Each of the three units has a capacity to produce 50mw electricity.

"The generation would be the same (130 mw) today (Sunday)", Shafiqul Islam, Project Manager of Kaptai Hydroelectric Power Plant told this correspondent yesterday.

Minimum 76 MSL water level is required for smooth operation of the

three units now in operation out of five. Normally, the water level remained at least at 82 MSL in May earlier.

Their operation has become risky now, he said.

The three units resumed operation on the night of May 11 after 14 hours' suspension due to technical fault. Two other units are idle for long due to technical problems.

The five units have a total generation capacity of 230MW.

The suspension was due to an unexpected technical fault caused by lack of combination between the gridline voltage capacity and generating voltage, the Project Manager said.

"We had to keep the three units out of operation because the gridline could not absorb the supply load," he added.

Mother, daughter killed by truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

A mother and her three-year-old daughter were killed when a truck knocked down their rickshaw at Char Para area in the town yesterday.

Amena, 30 and her daughter Arifa died on the spot witnesses said. She hailed from Moheshkhali village of Sunamganj district, police said.

Local people chased the truck and caught the driver and handed him over to police.

Police recovered the bodies and sent those to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) morgue for autopsy.

BDR, BSF hold 'courtesy meet'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

BDR and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) held a 'courtesy meeting' at Gachuapara border outpost (BOP) in Tura district in West Bengal, opposite to Gobrakura BOP in Halaughat upazila in Mymensingh district yesterday.

BDR Director General Major General Jahangir Alam Chowdhury NDC, PSC and Deputy Inspector General of BSF's Tura Sector R Colney led their respective sides.

Col. AHM Mukbul Hossain, NDC, Mymensingh Sector Commander of BDR 16 Battalion and Lt Col Illyas Hossain, Commanding Officer of BDR 16 Battalion (Netrokona) also attended the meeting from 12.40 pm to 1.10 pm.

Several high officials of BSF attended the half an hour meeting.

After the meeting, the BDR Director General told newsmen that they discussed various issues on border situation in a friendly atmosphere. The relation between BDR and BSF is very cordial and it will continue to main so in future, he hoped.

One killed, 10 injured in B'baria storm

OUR CORRESPONDENT *B'baria*

One person was killed and 10 people were injured when a storm battered the Sadar upazila areas yesterday.

Bhabatush, 40, a night guard, was killed when a tree fell on his house at Medda in the pourasabha area.

The 10-minut morning foray tore down at least 100 houses, uprooted trees blocking roads and snapped power supply. The power supply was however restored in the afternoon.

The badly affected areas are Kazipara, Medda, Sarkerpara, Saripur, Kandepara, North Mourai and Puniant in Brahmanbaria Pourasabha and Shuhilpur, Nandanpur in the Sadar upazila.

The storm also snapped telephone connections at places.



PHOTO: AZHAR UDDIN

A SPRINKLE OF WATER BRINGS RELIEF: Thirsty and weary crows seek refuge from scorching heat in a pond in Rajshahi yesterday.

Scorching heat paralyses life in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

The Rajshahi region is in the grip of a heat wave for the last few days, paralysing life.

The mercury rose to 35.8 degree Celsius yesterday, and may touch 40 degree Celsius by the weekend if there is no rain, the weather office here said.

Usually, the average temperature during May hovers over 33 degree Celsius in Rajshahi, rising up to 39.8 degree Celsius between May 10 and 13, officials said.

"Life in the city is unbearable due to heat, compounded by frequent power outage, water crisis and mosquito bite", remarked Yakub Ali Khan, a dweller at Ballapukur.

Rajshahi University Environmental Science Institute Director Prof Sonwar Jahan said studies revealed that the heat wave is due to declining water levels of rivers and depleting forests.

"A 100-gram river water can absorb 576 kilo calorie latent heat, but these days vast shoals of the Padma along the town reflect more sunbeams than the limited water bodies can absorb", he said.

"Scorching heat is not unusual here as Rajshahi is an area with average annual rainfall 40 percent less than the country's total rainfall", said RU Geology Department teacher Prof Dr Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan. This points to the gradual desertification due to withdrawal of water at Farakka, he said.

5-point suggestion to stamp out child labour from *bidi* factories

Workshop in Rangpur for continuation of ILO-WCL project

RAFIQUE SARKER AND AMANUR AMAN, from Rangpur

Speakers in a daylong workshop here yesterday suggested continuation of the ILO-WFCL project in Rangpur and Kushtia for another ten years to eliminate child labour from *bidi* factories, tobacco industries and other hazardous jobs.

The workshop held at RDRS Begum Rockeya Auditorium reviewed achievements of the 40-month project at Haragachh in Rangpur and Daulotpur, Mirpur, Kamarkhali, and Sader upzila in Kushtia, aimed at taking out children from *bidi* factories and rehabilitating them with training on different vocations.

The speakers including stakeholders in their review said the project was a tremendous success and put forward a set of recommendation to completely eliminate child labour from tobacco industries.

The recommendations include five-year non-formal education (NFE) for families involved with tobacco industries, strict implementation of labour laws, effective and constructive trade unionism, employment generation and poverty reduction through setting up of cottage industries and micro credit, eradication of dowry as well as polygamy, mainly prevalent among labourer class.

In the first session, Abdur Razzak, Action Programme Co-ordinator (APC) of Society for Social Service (SSS) and Zashim Uddin Akond of SETU presented achievements and drawbacks of the ILO-WFCL project in Rangpur and Kushtia respectively.



PHOTO: STAR

Participants at the workshop on child labour in bidi factories, held at RDRS Begum Rokeya Auditorium in Rangpur yesterday.

The two partner NGOs, together with others, implemented the project from November 2001 to March 2005.

Abdur Razzak said, seven local NGOs SSS, BRAC, LH, SEPOC, CB, ESDO, BDSC with funds from the United States Department of Labour (USDOL) took out about 10,000 out of about 20,000 child workers from hazardous jobs in Bidi factories and gave them scope for education and training on different vocations.

The NGOs provided the children with education, training, microcredit and tools for income generating

activities.

In Haragachh, 7904 children are still going to schools and 2212 adolescents have been engaged in activities like sewing, embroidery, carpentry, electric work, bi-cycle and rickshaw-van repair and in cottage industries making pen, soap and such other goods, he said.

He said, "All bidi factories in Haragachh have declared their factories free from child labour. It is a great achievement."

Zashim Uddin Akond said, 2586 children were taken out of Bidi factories in Kushtia and engaged in income generating activities.

He also declared at the work-

shop that all Bidi factories in Kushtia are now free from child labourers.

AT Siddique, Sector Coordinator of ILO, Dhaka, conducted the workshop while ILO Consultant Keith J Fisher spoke on the impact, assessment and final evaluation of the project.

President of Rangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) Mostafa Azad Chowdhury Babu, its former president and owner of Chad Tara Bidi Factory Mofazzal Hossen and representatives of different stakeholders attended the workshop.



PHOTO: STAR

Rajshahi University unit of Adhunik, an anti-smoking organisation, brought out a procession, followed by a rally, on the campus yesterday in observance of World Tobacco Free Day 2005. It was lead by Prof Nurul Absar, Prof Mahbubur Rahman and Prof Harun-ur-Rashid.

Stop appointment of unqualified teachers

RU Veterinary Science teachers demand at press conference

RU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Science Department of Rajshahi University yesterday alleged that its Chairman, violating RU Syndicate rules, has initiated appointment of five non-veterinary teachers in the department.

They made the allegation at a press conference held at a classroom in the department. They demanded cancellation of the

appointment process.

The five teachers chosen for appointment have no knowledge about animal husbandry science and none of them have the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree.

The five are Abdul Bari, Jugol Kumar Sarker, Arifur Rahman, Sayed Sarwar Zahan and Dr Mamunur-Rashid.

As per RU Syndicate rule, a teacher without DVM degree and veterinary science (honors and

masters) degree can not be appointed in the department, they said.

Without DVM degree a teacher can not provided education to veterinary students, they said.

Earlier in the morning, they submitted a memorandum to RU Vice-chancellor Prof Faisul Islam Faruki at his office and demanded cancellation of the appointment process in the interest of students and the university.

They urged the VC to intervene

to stop the appointments. Prof Dr Jalal Uddin Sarder, Prof Dr Golber Hossain, Prof Dr Khandoker Mojaffar Hossain and Prof Dr SM Khamruzzman were present, among others, at the press conference

When contacted, the department Chairman Prof Mamtazur Rahman over telephone, he said, "I heard about the complaint. I can not say anything about the matter right now".