

DU deadlock likely to linger as JCD, BCL still at loggerheads

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

The deadlock at Dhaka University (DU) following the death of a female student in a road crash is likely to linger as the authorities failed to bring the two rival student organisations -- Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) -- to the negotiation table to find a way out.

The death of Shammie Akhter on May 28 sparked a series of violence on the campus, leading to the deadlock between the two student organisations.

The two organisations have been at loggerheads since May 31 when the JCD attacked the BCL men centring on a bomb blast near its rally on the campus.

The JCD also attacked students and activists of other student organisations while they were demonstrating for removal of the proctor on May 29 and 30.

The campus violence prompted the authorities to postpone all the

examinations scheduled for this month. Meanwhile, the summer vacation of the university began on June 1 and the institution is scheduled to reopen on July 1.

Sources said the postponement of around 200 examinations would result in a session jam for about six months, adding to the suffering of some 30,000 students.

Both the student organisations have now been pressuring the authorities to meet their respective demands.

The BCL leaders demanded that the JCD activists responsible for the violence be expelled, otherwise they would launch tougher movements, including indefinite student strike at DU.

On the other hand, the JCD is not allowing the BCL men to enter the campus. It also demands expulsion of BCL men who vandalised the proctor's office.

Sources said there is no initiative to bring back normalcy at DU as Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz has

been waiting for the probe committee report on the basis of which he will take action against the persons responsible for violence.

Worse, the process of investigation into the violence is going on at a snail's pace. The six-member probe committee, headed by Treasurer Prof Syed Rashidul Hasan, has so far taken the interview of only seven teachers of the Institute of Fine Arts.

Official sources said the VC has also been facing a dilemma over taking actions against the students responsible as they are either leaders or activists of the JCD.

Though the VC has been seeking cooperation from both the JCD and BCL leaders, they did not pay any heed to his appeal, sources said, adding that only Proctor Prof AKA Firoz Ahmed is assisting the VC and keeping contact with the leaders of the JCD and BCL.

BCL General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu said they would not sit with the DU authorities until they take action against the JCD cadres

responsible for the violence.

A BCL source also said they might try to enter campus within a couple of days.

JCD General Secretary Shafiu Bari Babu said the students would not resist the BCL if they come to campus after expelling the outsiders, criminals and arms cadres.

"But if the Chhatra League wants to use the campus for political gains, we along with the students and guardians would resist them across the country," Babu added.

At an emergency meeting on Monday, the DU Syndicate urged the VC to continue dialogue with different student organisations to break the deadlock.

The meeting also banned the movement of heavy vehicles through the campus.

Chaired by the VC, the meeting also asked the hall administrations to take necessary measures to ensure harmony at all residential halls.



Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral M Hasan Ali Khan and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam decorate new Chief of Army Staff Major General Moeen U Ahmed with the Badge of Lieutenant General in presence of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the Dhaka Cantonment on Thursday.

DUAA office to be set up at DU Senate Building

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka University Alumni Association (DUAA) and DU authorities yesterday signed an agreement to set up a DUAA office in the under-construction Senate Building.

DUAA Secretary General Raquib Uddin Ahmed and DU Treasurer Dr Syed Rashidul Hasan signed the agreement at a simple ceremony at the Registrar Building.

Vice Chancellor Dr SMA Faiz, Barrister Mainul Hossain, senior journalists Gias Kamal Chowdhury and Jagul Ahmed Chowdhury were present at the signing ceremony with DUAA President Syed Manjur Elahi in the chair.

According to the agreement, 4000 square feet of space will be allocated on the ground floor of the Senate Building for the DUAA office.

Raquib thanked the DU authorities for allocating a space in the senate building.

Dr Faiz in his speech urged the DUAA members to work for the welfare of the university.

Mango and Silk Festival begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The three-day Mango and Silk Festival began at the local Parjatan Motel yesterday.

Bon Voyage Tourism, a major private tour operator and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, national tourism organisation, have jointly organised the festival.

The Daily Star and ATN Bangla are the media partners of the programme.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Aminul Haque formally inaugurated the festival.

Rajshahi University Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain, Deputy Commissioner Syed Ahsanul Kabir, silk-trader Lutfor Rahman Apu, mango-expert Dr Shafiqul Haque, and festival co-ordinator Qantara K Khan spoke at the inaugural function.

Qantara said the festival aims at promoting historic places and monuments as tourist spots to earn foreign exchange and create job opportunities for many.

The festival drew several hundred visitors who were overwhelmed with some 50 local and foreign varieties of mangoes and silk products.

Rajshahi Fruit Research Centre

displayed a large variety of mangoes.

Fazli, Kajla, Langra, Khirshapat, Amrapali, Gopalbhog, Ranipasad, Himsagor, Karabau, Bou Tola, Jhauni Lata, Kohitur, Kanchan Khosal, and some

foreign varieties like Palmar, Keit, Irwin and Banana were worth seeing with their colours and shapes.

Other than giant silk producing company Usha Silk, Women Entrepreneurs' Development Project displayed a huge number of silk sarees, three-pieces, shirts and fatuas with beautiful decorations.

Ankur and Mayuri also displayed various silk items while Trinomul presented Nakshi Kantha.

The sponsors yesterday organised a package tour to Barind Research Museum, local mango orchards and silk factories for interested visitors.

The programme was rounded off with a cultural function in the evening. The whole function was performed by the members of indigenous Shantal artistes.

Today's tour will take the visitors to Kusumba Mosque in Naogaon and Sonam Mosque in Chapainawabganj.

Besides, the local artistes will perform the traditional Gambhira.

The festival will remain open for all from 9.00am to 9.00pm daily.



Death anniversary of Dr Neelima Ibrahim today

Today is the third death anniversary of eminent academic and writer Dr Neelima Ibrahim, says a press release.

A champion of women's rights and pioneer of cultural movement, Dr Neelima was the president of Bangladesh Mahila Samity.

The Mahila Samity will place wreaths at her graveyard at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur at 8:00am to mark the day.

A milad mahfil will be held at the Neelima Ibrahim Auditorium of the Samity at 10:00am.

A discussion will also be held at the Samity auditorium at 4:30pm today, with renowned educationist Prof Akhtar Imam as chief guest.

46 pc of geographical area facing land degradation

Dr Ainun Nishat tells discussion

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a discussion in the city yesterday said land degradation is increasing gradually in the country directly affecting the womenfolk, who are traditionally involved with the household tasks.

Speaking at the discussion titled "Women and Desertification", they said desertification and land degradation is affecting the socio-economic and living conditions of the people particularly in the affected regions.

Department of Environment (DoE) and Forum of Environment Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) jointly organised the discussion in collaboration with the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Department of Forest (DoF) at the FEJB auditorium to mark the World Desertification Day.

IUCN Country Representative Dr Ainun Nishat presented the keynote paper. Environment and Forests Secretary Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury also spoke at the discussion, chaired by DoE Director General Kham Md Ibrahim Hossain.

Mentioning available data on land degradation, Dr Nishat said that about 46 per cent of the country's total geographical area is facing some forms of degradation, either slight or moderately dry at present.

Dr Nishat, in the keynote paper,

further said land degradation and desertification is a serious problem in the country resulting in loss of productivity of soils, and natural resources such as forestry, biodiversity etc.

He identified some causes for land degradation. These include improper cultivation on terrace land, low-efficient irrigation system, imbalanced use of fertilizer, improper use of pesticides, over-exploitation of bio-mass from agricultural fields, river bank erosion and accretions, sandy over wash on agricultural land, salinity intrusion, unplanned rural infrastructure and industrial development without consideration of land

use priority.

Dr Nishat stressed some measures that include involvement of local community in implementation of programmes, greater integration of existing programmes and activities and a more coordinated approach particularly in local level, initiate rehabilitation/restoration of the degraded lands and incorporate income generation programme along with addressing desertification programmes.

Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury said the present government is taking proper measures for protecting the country's environment.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry organises a discussion on 'Bangladesh-Austria business development.' Venue: DCCI Auditorium, Motijheel. Time: 3.00pm.

Seminar

Bangladesh Breastfeeding Foundation organises a seminar on 'Relationship of psychological and biomedical factors with timing of initiation of breastfeeding of the newborn in different socioeconomic status.' Venue: Cirdap Auditorium, Tophkana Road. Time: 10.00am.

Workshop

Women for Women, a research and study group, organises a workshop on repression of women. Venue: WVA Auditorium, House-20, Road-27, Dhanmondi. Time: 9.30am.

Inauguration

The inaugural ceremony of Air India flight between Delhi-Dhaka-Kolkata-London will be held with Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin as chief guest. Venue: Zia International Airport. Time: 10.15am.

Prize giving ceremony

The prize giving ceremony of Jatiya Seerat Committee Bangladesh will be held. Venue: Grand Azad Hotel, Purana Paltan. Time: 3.00pm.

Hunger strike

National Front of Teachers and Employees will stage a token hunger strike to realise its various demands. Venue: Mukhtangon, Ramna. Time: 11.00am.

Rotary Central

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 1.30pm.

Rotary North West

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 5.30pm.

Art exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of first solo art exhibition titled 'Reality and Perception' by Moon will be held with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as chief guest. Venue: Drk Gallery, House-58, Road-15A (New), Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00pm. The exhibition will remain open till June 22 from 3.00pm to 8.00pm daily.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a film titled 'Marooned in Iraq.' Venue: Academy Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Garments and Shilpa Sramik Federation stages a demonstration at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday demanding minimum wages and security at workplace.

WEATHER

TODAY

Moderately heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet and at a few places over Rajshahi division and at one or two places over Khulna division till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said. It said mild heat wave sweeping over Khulna division and the region of Rajshahi may continue.

Highest temperature 39.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 22.8 degree Celsius at Hatia.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:48pm today and rises at 5:11am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.0	25.5	83	76
Chittagong	33.5	25.0	74	78
Rajshahi	37.0	26.2	75	69
Khulna	36.2	27.8	86	74
Barisal	35.0	24.8	86	86
Sylhet	28.9	26.9	83	—
Cox's Bazar	33.5	24.8	84	80

Saarc Info Centre opens in Kathmandu

BSS, Kathmandu

The Saarc Information Centre (SIC) was launched here yesterday with the representatives from the seven member states.

Senior officials of the Saarc member states concluded the two-day meeting of its governing body finalising a plan of action that the centre will implement over the coming years.

Sirajul Islam, additional secretary to Ministry of Information, represented Bangladesh in the meeting. Dhaka will hold the chair of the governing body for the next two years.

Nepalese Information Minister Tanka Dhakal inaugurated the governing board meeting on Thursday with a call to make the SIC a central storage point of information on socio-economic development, trade and investment and media exchanges.

The SIC will be permanently based at Kathmandu and coordinate information and media development activities by establishing a data base and a central information archive for disseminating news and other print materials for use by member states.

Obituary

BSS, Faridpur

Professor Mohammad Taleb Ali, a noted educationist and former principal of Government Sarada Sundary Mahila College, passed away due to prolonged illness at Faridpur Diabetic Hospital yesterday at the age of 65.

Prof Taleb Ali left behind his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of relatives, friends, admirers and students to mourn his death.

He was buried at Alipur graveyard after namaz-e-janaza on the Pubali Club premises.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf visited his Kuthibari Kamalapur residence to console the members of the bereaved family.



PHOTO: STAR

Sylhet Bihag Unnayan Mohila Sangram Parishad forms a human chain at Osmani Udyan in the city yesterday urging the government to save the Osmani Udyan.

Govt pushing country towards violence: WPB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The alliance government is pushing the country towards violence by taking no steps to reform the Election Commission and the caretaker government system.

This was stated in a resolution adopted at the second day meeting of the central committee of the Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) in the city yesterday with party President Rashed Khan Menon in the chair.

The resolution said the age limit of Supreme Court judges has been increased so that a person who is loyal to the ruling party can be selected as the chief advisor of the next caretaker government.

Besides, the tenure of the disputed secretary of the election commission has been extended to achieve the same goal, it added.

The resolution said the activities of the government have further strengthened the doubt about the neutrality and credibility of the next general election.

It demanded cancellation of present 'ineffective parliament' where quorum crisis is a regular feature to pave the way for a sovereign and effective parliament.

The meeting demanded reopening of all closed mills and factories and ensuring of minimum wages for the workers.

It also demanded withdrawal of all cases filed against the leaders who protested the transfer of compressed natural gas plant from Ashuganj.

The leaders condemned the alliance government for undermining the democratic rights of people and torturing the leaders and activists of the opposition parties.

Party General Secretary Bimol Biswas, Haider Akbar Khan Rano, Nurul Hasan, Fazle Hossain Badsha, Anisur Rahman Malik, Prof Abudus Sattar, Principal Afsar Ali, Dr Akhtar Sobhan Mashrur, and Advocate Nazrul Islam spoke at the meeting.

3 local leaders arrested in Rangamati on abduction charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Police arrested three leaders of Adi O Shanyee Bangalee Kalyan Parishad on charges of abduction of a bus driver.

Of them, Secretary Azam Ali Azam of the district unit of the Parishad was picked up yesterday from the general hospital where he was undergoing treatment following alleged torture by army men.

Two others -- Sadek Bhandary and Abu Taher -- were arrested from their houses in the town on Thursday midnight. All of them were sent to jail yesterday.

The arrests were made two days after the Parishad in association with Parbatya Chattagram Jono Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) held a rally and submitted memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner in protest against torture of 18 leaders.

Police suspected that the three were involved in the abduction of bus driver Ripon Chakma who was kidnapped from Ghilachhari on the Rangamati-Mohalchhari-Khagrachhari road on June 12.

They were arrested following two cases filed with Kotwali Police Station against them yesterday and the day before, police said.

In a press release yesterday, the Parishad condemned the arrests, terming it a 'harassment'. It also demanded immediate release of the leaders.