

ASSAULT ON PRINCIPAL Strike observed at Khilgaon College

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and students of Khilgaon Model University College yesterday observed a strike on the college campus protesting assault of its principal by cadres of an immediate past minister.

Teachers' council at a meeting also decided to go for indefinite strike if the culprits are not brought to book in two days, collegesourcessaid.

A case was filed with Khilgaon Police Station on Tuesday evening but no one was arrested as of yesterday.

UNIC Library offers free services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Library offers all official records of the major organs of the UN for the convenience of media personnel, researchers, rights activists and students, said UNCI authorities at a press conference yesterday.

UNIC Library organised the press briefing to apprise the reporters of its multidimensional services at its office at IDB Bhaban at Agargaon in the city.

The library provides information on the UN through data, documents, newsletters, pamphlets, posters, books, audio and videocassettes to the local people and meet the increasing demand of NGOs, government officials, academics, students, women activists, environmentalists and media.

While briefing, M Moniruzzaman, reference officer, said the library provides UN library networking, internet service, distribution of information material by electronic and traditional means, video show and video loan service.

The library contains over 5,000 books, including historic and recent documents, treaties and conventions on women, children, environment, peacekeeping and peace making, human rights, economic and other social development, poverty alleviation and disaster relief, he explained.

He urged all, especially media personnel, to use the library resource to enrich their knowledge and reports.

"Any individual may also use the library without being member and free of cost," he said adding, but we encourage group and organisation based users.

The library remains open from 8:30am to 3:30pm Sunday to Thursday for all.

Drug trafficker arrested in Narayanganj

BSS, Narayanganj

Members of the joint forces arrested a drug trafficker and seized 100 grams of hashish from his possession at Majher Char bus stand under Sonargaon police station in the district on Tuesday night.

The drug trafficker was identified as Mohammad Naim, 30.

Police said the trafficker was arrested at Majher Char bus stand for his suspicious movements and after searching his body 100 grams of hashish was seized.

A case has been filed under Sonargaon Police Station in this connection.

Teachers and students alleged that some of the criminals were seen to roam near the college though police said they could not find any culprit.

Around 15 cadres of the former minister beat up Asadullah, principal of the college, on Tuesday for not complying with the illegal practice about form fill-up of HSC candidates. Asadullah sustained injuries in his eye and was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Rehena Begum, wife of the principal, alleged that some attackers came at DMCH and threatened her to withdraw the case.

Meanwhile, National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE) condemned the incident and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Leaders of the NFTE also demanded removal of all political persons from the governing and managing bodies of all the educational institutes.

AMCH receives Tk 12.65 lakh in January

Dhaka Ahsania Mission received donations of about Tk 12.65 lakh for its Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH) last month, says a press release.

The names of the donors and amounts of their donations are Prof Nazneen Afrose Huq, Tk five lakh, Asheque, Ahsania Mission, Virginia, USA, about Tk 2 lakh, Rupsha Iqbal & Rezwan Sharif, about Tk 1.45 lakh, Selina Begum, Kamran Bakr & Nahid F Bakr and one anonymous person, Tk one lakh each, Prof Abdul Huq & Laila Huq (on behalf of Bangladeshi expatriates in Australia), Tk 60000, Meena Bazar, about Tk 24000, Kohinoor Sultana and Ayesha Khan Lodi, Tk 10000 each, Md Hanif, Tk 5000, Md Nurul Islam, Tk 1500 and Amina Afroz Tk 1000.



Amobile court in co-operation with the joint forces seizes forged corrugated sheets from Famous Dheu Machine Ghar at Kadamtali intersection in Keraniganj yesterday.

China retakes centre stage in N Korea crisis

REUTERS, Beijing

Delegates to six-party talks began converging on the Chinese capital yesterday seeking to defuse North Korea's smouldering nuclear crisis, but envoys and analysts cautioned that any final deal is a distant prospect.

Flying in to a city decked out for the upcoming Lunar New Year holiday, the US chief negotiator said the talks starting today would focus on implementing a 2005 statement offering isolated North Korea economic and security concessions in return for ending its nuclear weapons ambitions.

"But I want to emphasise that the real success is when we complete the September '05 agreement," Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill told reporters after arriving in Beijing.

"Not just when we start the '05 agreement, but when we finish it, so we're not going to finish that this week. We'll just maybe take a good first step," he said.

China has set no official deadline for the session, but its chief delegate, Wu Dawei, has said the talks may last three or four days. The Lunar New Year of the Pig begins on February 18.

Efforts to convince Pyongyang to renounce nuclear arms have assumed fresh urgency since it defied international warnings and carried out a first nuclear test in October, prompting UN sanctions endorsed by even the North's long-time backer, China.

Hill said progress at the latest round of the intermittent talks depended on all six parties — host China, the two Koreas, the United States, Japan and Russia.

"We worked very hard for this, done consultations all over the place, so let's see if we can make some progress," he said.

South Korean envoy Chun Yung-woo echoed the need to make headway.

"The six-party talks are at a moment of truth. At this round, we must turn a corner in making North

Korea's pledge to denuclearise a reality," he told reporters.

CHINESE DOUBTS

But a Chinese nuclear expert from an official think tank voiced doubts about the readiness of Pyongyang and Washington to set aside their differences.

"Frankly speaking, I have changed my view from optimistic to pessimistic," Teng Jianqun, deputy secretary general of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, told a news briefing in Beijing.

A US financial crackdown on North Korea, as well as the North's nuclear test, stood in the way of potential agreement, said Teng, adding: "Mistrust between the two countries is the core element."

"I am just wondering whether the parties concerned, especially the US and North Korea, would like to solve the dispute in the short term. The answer might be not," he said.

The latest round is likely to focus on persuading North Korea to first

shut down its Yongbyon nuclear plant, a source of plutonium for its nuclear weapons programme. Washington has said that North Korea has also run a uranium enrichment programme, providing another potential source of weapons material.

But the North has its own demands and they may again bog down negotiations as they did in December.

North Korea has said it will not contemplate scrapping its nuclear weapons until Washington lifts a banking crackdown prompted by accusations that Pyongyang ran dollar counterfeiting and other illicit business.

A new round of bilateral talks in Beijing in January between US Treasury Department and North Korean officials seeking to resolve the dispute ended with no sign of a breakthrough.

Rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 16
relations officer of Ansar and VDP said they are the owner of the 0.6584 acre land at Khilgaon Chowdhurypara and did not occupy it as described in the report.

The rejoinder said the works ministry allotted the land to Ansar on October 21, 1987 for building an officers' mess and a rest house. Since then, Ansar and VDP has been using the land as a training ground and a motor workshop, and built some temporary structures on it.

It said a certain quarter prevented Ansar and VDP from building the officers' mess and rest house on the land misusing political power.

The rejoinder further said it was learnt from the newspaper report that the works ministry cancelled Ansar's 99-year permanent lease in 1996 and allotted the land to Shobujmoti Trust (SMT) in 2000. The allotment to SMT, however, was cancelled in 2004, it added.

The rejoinder claimed that the works ministry did not notify Ansar about the cancellation of the allotment through any letter or notice, neither did it take the land back from Ansar.

The Ansar rejoinder said it is not necessary to follow the High Court order of February 2, 2006 as Ansar and VDP is not a party or respondent to the writ petition filed by SMT.

OUR REPLY:

Having verified with the residents of the locality, the assertion by Ansar that they have physically been in possession of the land since 1987 and have further continued to use it since then as their training ground and a motor workshop, was found to be untrue.

Since 1987, the first time Ansar had any form of physical presence in the property was through setting up of a few tents 10 years later in October 2006 during Ramadan, which served as 'Fair Price' stores.

In its rejoinder, Ansar did not con-

tradict our report that on January 31, 2007 hundreds of their personnel arrived in trucks carrying tins, bamboos and other equipment to erect a fence around the property and to take it in their possession. Ansar also did not challenge our report that no magistrate was present while they were taking possession of the land.

After cancellation of the allotment to SMT by the works ministry as per the directive of erstwhile minister Mirza Abbas in 2004, a work order was issued by the works ministry to a company for development of the land as a park, and a few swings and other structures were erected there.

After a petition had been filed by SMT, cancellation of the allotment as well as the issuance of the work order were both subsequently stayed by the High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Md Abdul Matin and Justice AFM Abdul Rahman, and a rule was issued to the works ministry ordering it not to carry out any construction on the land of Shobujmoti Trust and also not to change the nature and character of the land in any manner till a settlement of the writ petition.

The High Court directive as well as the injunction was handed over to Ansar by SMT on October 9, 2006 (after it had set up the tents of 'Fair Price' outlets).

The Daily Star investigations interestingly reveal that on November 5, 2006 Ansar and VDP filed an application with the court for including its name in the Writ Petition No 12 of 2005 filed by SMT against the works ministry and in so doing accepted the fact that the matter was pending in the court.

We stand by our report.



PHOTO: STAR

Tarunnya Nattyagoshthi stages a drama on the concluding day of a week-long Street Drama Festival at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday. Group Theatre Federation organised the festival.

Oxfam project to create awareness about disaster

BSS, Dhaka

Oxfam Bangladesh, in partnership with Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre and Friends in Village Development Bangladesh, is implementing the Community Based Disaster Risk Management Project in the country.

European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian AID under its Third Action Plan for South Asia will provide financial support to the project.

The project aims at increasing awareness and response capacities of local communities to potential and frequent natural disasters and reduce their impacts on the most vulnerable, said a press release yesterday.

The project is being implemented through two components by supporting communities living in flood-prone areas as well as in earthquake-prone wards of Dhaka and Sylhet City Corporations to reduce their vulnerability to disasters.

The project is pioneering earthquake preparedness activities at national and community level, the release added.